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FOR THE QUEEN IN
SOUTH AFRICA

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FOR THE QUEEN

IN

SOUTH AFRICA

BY

CARYL DAVIS HASKINS

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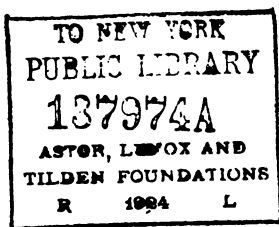
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TO
My Comrade of Boyhood's Days,
CAPTAIN OWEN GURNEY FOX,
Of the Bechuanaland Mounted Constabulary,
WHO IS TO-DAY PLAYING HIS PART AT MAPEKING IN THE
LATEST AND GREATEST OF THE SOUTH-
AFRICAN WARS,
THESE TALES OF STRIFE ARE DEDICATED.

FEBRUARY 1, 1900.



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**THE FULL-BACK TELLS THE
STORY**

THE FULL-BACK TELLS THE STORY

THE ball was on the fifteen-yard line, close under our goal-posts, and it lacked but ten minutes to "time."

With the ball held just as defeat seemed before us, we arose from the general rush of the tackle, and bent our backs with a will to the shove of the scrimmage.

The drifting October mist, almost a fine rain, had made a soft ground, and one could scarce see through the coat of mud the black jerseys of our own men with the broad white "W" on their chests.

As we rose from knee to foot, and went down again in a last effort to make a stand against our too strong opponents, the restless throng at the side lines drifted down behind our goal, while around the outside played

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the persistent crowd of the "Junior School," chasing one another in and out, and adding a shrill treble to the constant chant which strove in vain to drive us on to better things.

The ball came out of the scrimmage with a rush.

In an instant it was snapped to a dangerous quarter-back in yellow, and he, closely backed up by the "half-backs," plunged into our disordered line for nearly a ten-yard gain.

It was at this dire moment that the disordered howling on the side lines broke into a sharp glad cry of, "Brooks! — Brooks! — Brooks!"

"On the ball, Westwick! On the ball!"

Then over and above all the tumult, reaching us even in the mass of tumbling men around the ball, there came the deep strong shout of our school hero, the erstwhile captain of the school, Brooks Major.

It was he who had taken first place in the Sandhurst finals, who had carried the ball forty yards down the field, and had

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snatched victory from defeat in the famous game against the "Royal Naval."

Out he came into the field, with a dash, mackintosh streaming wildly behind, stick waving wildly in air. Close up to the scrimmage he came, with the old rallying-cry of, "Westwick on the ball! — Put your shoulder to it! — Good old Westwick!"

We tried to cheer for him then, poor mud-bedraggled youngsters that we were.

The ball came out of the scrimmage. Our half-back had it, and went around the end like a rocket. Down the field; — over the kick-off line he went; — nothing between him and the goal now but the full-back — at a good rattling pace, pursued, pushed on, encouraged by the sharp, rhythmic, chanting cheer of the school-house crowd, led by Brooks with waving stick and stentorian voice.

Then with the far goal post almost under his nose, and the yellow full-back under his knees, there came the shrill whistle of the time-keeper.

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A groan went up from the side lines, which would not have done discredit to the Trojan horse, and we all lay down just where we stood, and realized that Brooks Major had not come soon enough.

When we had breath again, and the side lines surged in around us, and the lemons had been cut, and real rain was beating around us, the captain of our team, a humble disciple of Brooks Major, called on his bedraggled crew for : "Three cheers for Brooks Major!" — "Three cheers for Sandhurst!" and "Three cheers for the army, and a jolly good row!"

Then there came to us across the playground, splodging along through the puddles in plebeian goloshes, with gown all bedraggled, and mortar-board streaming at the four corners, the dear old Head Master, with his great gray beard all bristling, as it ever seemed to be at such times, and with his china-blue eyes all aglow.

He placed one hand on the shoulder, the broad, square, brawny shoulder, of Brooks

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Major, and held up the other for silence. All the little boys stopped their yells, the big fellows looked attentive. "Young gentlemen, your school captain came out of Sandhurst yesterday. Her Majesty's government knows a good man. To-morrow he gets his commission. Young gentlemen, the army is a noble profession. Nearly all of you know that, like your fathers before you. Brooks Major is Brooks Major no longer. To-morrow he will be Mr. Brooks of the Royal Rifle Brigade, and let us hope, young gentlemen, that some day it will be not 'Brooks Major,' but 'Major Brooks.'"

This is how our hero was launched into the army ; with the cheers of his school behind him ; with his name in gilt on the wall of the sixth form room, with the worship of the school.

The next day, in the select company of two or three of the sixth form men, who waited for him in ambitious but dignified silence in the corridor, Brooks Major reported at the Horse Guards. When he came out again it

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was with a broad glad smile, with a parchment in his hand, and the conquest of the world at his feet.

For one short week he was among us, counselling the foot-ball captain, closeted with the "Head," coaching the team, always jolly, always helpful, — on waiting orders.

Then it befell, one morning when the sun shone, that the "Head" entered to us with Brooks Major, after chapel, and Brooks Major looked very sober and very strong and very handsome, and we heard, in a few, short, grave sentences, that Brooks Major was ordered to the Cape, that his battalion was already there in its troop-ship, and that he would travel day and night to overtake it.

Brooks Major made a little speech, which troubled him greatly. He told us how he hoped we would play a good game, and keep close onto the ball, and not let the other fellows break through, and, above all, how we must honor and guard the name of the old school. Then he stopped a minute, and said,

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"Good-by, you chaps," and turned around and went away in a hurry, and we did not see him again, like that.

The little coasting-steamer went dodging up the channel at Port Natal at half speed, in the gray of the morning, and Brooks Major leaned on the rail and felt nervous.

Incessantly he repeated to himself fragments from various parts of the "Company School" and "Skirmish Regulations," for Brooks Major was chasing his battalion, and thought his battalion was at Port Natal, and in twenty-four hours more he would be a real subaltern for the first time.

But the third battalion of the Rifle Brigade was not at Port Natal. Away up country, among the waving grass of the veldt, it was already doing skirmish duty, and Brooks Major was far from reporting to the Colonel, when he stepped ashore that day, in all the glory of his new uniform.

On the pier there stood two or three men in the red blouse and the Scotch cap of the

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Commissary corps, and from them Brooks Major learned that he was too late.

But Brooks Major had played close up to the ball all his life, and his father had been a soldier, and so had his grandfather, and he in his turn had inherited the sword from others before him ; therefore, later in the day, said Brooks Major to the Commandant at Port Natal, —

“I hope you won't hold me here, sir, since there won't be any more men going through for a month. If I must wait for them I may miss my chance.”

The Commandant looked very severe, and used some very strong language, and told Brooks Major he was “a fool,” and “they had no business to send children out to active service,” and if he wanted to “go and get shot” he could go, and be hanged to him !

After which the Commandant invited Brooks Major to accept the gift of one of his mounts, which he described as an unruly hard-mouthed beast that he had been trying to give away for months.

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Brooks Major, desiring to escape before the permission was countermanded, accepted the mount, grinned, turned red, and went back to the place commonly called a hotel, and told his man to go to the Commandant's stable and get the mount, and to pack the saddlebags. He gave his man money wherewith to buy himself a mount, and looked knowing, and told him to be sure that said mount was duly "salted," and whistled the first bar of "The Girl I Left Behind Me," wishing all the time that he had the Westwick team behind *him*.

February is autumn at the Cape. In the early hours the air is sharp, and cuts the neck of the man who has worn a collar all his life. It makes the horses tuck their quarters under them, and take imaginary gates and barriers at every hundred yards or so.

Out over the westward wagon trail, into the chilly gray of the near veldt, went young Brooks, with his man close behind him. He was mounted on the Commandant's bay, and every minute or two he looked behind, fearful

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lest an orderly should overtake him with a recall.

Only one "change," a bit of soap, and a pound of tobacco, in his saddle-bag. One hundred and more miles to go over the veldt of dry waving grass, across kopjes and dry watercourses, through a half-hostile country, the old school behind, and her Majesty's Royal Rifle Brigade ahead.

Happy enough he was that night to find shelter in the not too comfortable barn of a half-hostile Dutchman. Only too glad the next night, when he was well out of the settlements, that his service overcoat was warm, and that he was blessed with a healthy digestion and good sleeping abilities.

His man, quite quietly to himself, was very glad too, when the darkness came and hid him, that he might extract from his own saddle-bag that mysterious bottle which Brooks' saddle-bag did not know, but which the man fondly believed was better than any overcoat.

The next day the horses plodded along very quietly, and the man, who had seen

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South African service before with Brooks' father, led him, not over the open veldt, but through devious paths which hid them — sometimes between two hills, like the work of giant ants; sometimes for miles over the rough rock-strewn bottoms of such kloofs as served their general direction.

As the sun was casting long shadows behind them under their horses' quarters, there came to them from away down the western sky the long brazen notes of the recall.

Brooks sat up straight in his saddle, and repeated aloud with great violence whole pages from the "Company School," then pricked his horse into a canter over the rolling ground ahead, and caught in the last glimmer of the sun the white tents of the little army ahead of him.

Breaking into a gallop, struggling in the mean time to hold his infantry sword under one foot, he rode down into the long depression with the great hill before it, and met in the dip at the bottom a patrol of the Fifth Lancers.

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Now it should be a matter of record that Brooks knew they were the Fifth Lancers, because he had been told that the Fifth Lancers were out there. There was no saffron and blue about them, no graceful head-gear, no lances with fluttering pennons, just three or four yellow-colored men unfamiliar with water, with flannel shirts open at the throat, riding breeches much the worse for wear, little Scotch caps belonging to the infantry, only without the "flutterers," and from cap to boot one predominant color, the reddish yellow of the dust under their horses' hoofs.

Suddenly young Brooks felt abashed at his very new uniform, and at the clatter of the sword by his side, which the other fellows seemed to have forgotten.

There spurred out from among the other men the most unwashed of them all, with a carbine dangling over his knee, and a short black pipe in his mouth. Up to young Brooks he rode, with a sharp fling of the fingers perhaps to the level of the shoulder,

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and having cleared his voice, this soiled young man searched diligently through an intricate pocket in his trousers and produced a flask. Holding this forward to the embarrassed captain of our school, he said all in a breath :

“Hello, young 'un! How did you get through? There isn't much to drink out there where you came from, you'd best try some home Scotch.”

With vast respect Brooks humbly asked if he was in time for the row, and being reassured on this score, speedily became fast friends (for men make friends quickly in war days) with the young subaltern of Light Horse, who led him quickly to his Colonel's tent, and cheered his heart with a final parting word of advice to “get out of those clothes, or they would think he was the Duke of Cambridge.”

The Colonel of the Third Battalion of the Rifle Brigade was to be known on Bond Street by the iridescence of his silk hat and his varnished boots. As Brooks saw him first and last, poor chap, he looked as yellow

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as the ground under him. He sat under the fly of a little field tent, diligently writing on a knee-pad.

Brooks stood and saluted and coughed, and coughed and saluted, for what seemed like an hour before the old man looked up and scowled at him with much vehemence.

When he caught the Colonel's eye, young Brooks said, holding out the sealed note which the Commandant at Port Natal had sent by him, "Reported for duty, sir!" Whereupon the old man took the note, opened it, shut and opened his mouth, shut it again with a snap, and got up and walked twice around the tent pole; then turning sharp round on the youngster, he said in anything but honeyed accents, —

"Who in thunder are you? What are you here for?"

Brooks saluted again, and finding his power of speech utterly wanting, saluted a third time and awaited developments.

The Colonel waited, too, until, finding speech incumbent upon him, quoth he at last,

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“Are you any relation to Colonel Brooks of the Sixteenth Bengal?”

Young Brooks with many blushes managed to say, “No sir,—that is, not any relation in particular, sir,—I’m just his son, sir!”

Whereupon young Brooks was deeply shocked for the discipline of the service by being severely hugged by the old gentleman, who immediately told a long story about how they had served together, the old gentleman and Brooks’ father, in the Khyber Pass, and how her Majesty’s government, be hanged to it, had no business to send out infants to fight the Boers; and how he was proud of him, sir—proud of him! that he got through alive in an enemy’s country.

Then the Colonel led young Brooks to his company commander, who proved to be tall and bony and undemonstrative; who shook him by the hand perfunctorily, and turned him over without further words to the Senior Lieutenant, who was short and fat and jolly, and found Brooks’ tobacco excellent.

The bugles sounded “Trenchers and Peas!”

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and young Brooks' man immediately sought out the first sergeant, and partook of meat with him. Brooks ate of salt beef with the Senior Lieutenant, and presently being joined by their friend of the Lancers, they all three smoked Brooks' birdseye together, and unto Brooks was unfolded a marvellous tale.

"Up yonder," said the Senior Lieutenant, "about three thousand of those Dutchmen have dug a lot of trenches on top of the hill, on the big hill where you see the reflection from their fires; and the duffers jolly well think that they can keep us from running over them and driving them out, when the old man gets ready."

Brooks did n't answer.

The Senior Lieutenant helped himself from the new stock of tobacco, and having duly lighted, resumed.

"Only three thousand of those Johnnies, and here are six hundred of us, not counting the black fellows."

Brooks listened, much impressed, and quoted from the "Company School" on mass

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formations, to the great edification of his Lancer friend, who didn't think much of Tommy Atkins anyhow.

Having smoked one more pipe, and learned how in a day or two the little army of six hundred Englishmen was to walk up the hill, drive out the Boers, end the war, and put the dear old Jack upon the highest peak, and that the "old man" was planning it all, and had had the battalion commanders in his tent' that very afternoon working it out, Brooks rolled up in the Senior Lieutenant's spare blanket, with the promise of being introduced to the rear file of his company in the morning.

In a few moments he was back at old Westwick again, coaching the team on the new tackle, and getting ready for the famous match with the Royal Naval College.

Suddenly he woke with a start. There was a little scratching upon something, and opening his eyes he saw silhouetted by the moonlight on the tent front the figure of a man.

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The Senior Lieutenant was awake ahead of him, and crept with many uncomplimentary remarks to the tent fly, flinging it open. There stood without an orderly, who, saying a few hasty words, vanished to the next tent, where the scratching was renewed.

The Senior Lieutenant drew in his breath with a low whistle, yawned with a great show of annoyance, turned to young Brooks, who was much too proud to inquire what it all meant, and said, "Marching orders, young 'un." He then proceeded without further explanation to pull on his much battered boots, the only raiment necessary to complete his toilet.

Young Brooks arose from the ground, dusted off his brand-new uniform instinctively, and went out into the night.

Men were running here and there. A color sergeant, with a yellow stained color, stood in the open with the company commander, and beside them, a little way from the colors, stood one whom young Brooks instinctively knew was the General in command, and a third man whom he had never seen.

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The men were turning out, and running here and there in the moonlight swiftly and quietly, and presently two company lines formed up under whispered orders. The company commander motioned to the Senior Lieutenant, and having told him much of importance, the Senior Lieutenant came straight to the rear file, and confided to Brooks that they were going on special service, and that "there was going to be a row in the morning."

When the two companies were formed, young Brooks ran his eye critically down the somewhat uneven line to the left, and found every eye fixed on the "new subaltern."

The third man of the recent group stepped out before them from the side of the Colonel, and said in a low voice: "Company A, Company D, attention! Every man will draw the strap of his rifle tight. Keep your hand on your cartridge pouches. Let nothing rattle. Company front. Right face. March!"

The little troop of men, not knowing whither they went, filed off into the shadow of the great hill, and moved silently along

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towards its other side. Three miles they went stumbling along in the darkness, and then they were halted and ordered to lie down.

Calling the officers aside, the Major, for it proved to be the Major in command, told them that the battle was to be in the morning; that they were sent on a detour of the hill, and were now lying opposite to the main body of the troops; that before daylight the General would send them orders to make a display of force, strike and distract the enemy, while the main body assaulted the hill, after the artillery had made a way; or — “But that won’t happen, you know” — to retire and join the main body again, as developments might show to be wisest.

The Major was short and square and broad, and he stood and walked with the gait which tells of a life in the saddle rather than on foot. He was not an heroic figure as he stood, barely discernible in the gray misty atmosphere that hangs over the upland veldt just before dawn. But the little group of

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officers about him, even Brooks, knew him for what he was ; not alone by repute, but because, in scanning the list over and over again, they had seen on that page of "Whittaker" which is headed "V. C." that his name stood close to the top in the second column.

"Now, gentlemen," said the Major, and as he said it, Brooks pinched himself to see if he was dreaming, — "Now, gentlemen, I shall have to ask you all to lie down with your men. This is no time for those who bear her Majesty's commission to show mistaken courage when duty calls them to secrete themselves. You will each return to your command, gentlemen, and you will there lie down, and you will stay upon the ground until such time as events may call for further action. Now, gentlemen, good-morning."

They were very prosaic words ; and what is more, Brooks did not at all approve of lying down. There was nothing in the "Company School" that said anything about an officer lying down. At Skirmish School at Sandhurst, the officers never lay down

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under any circumstances. Nevertheless, an order is an order, and Brooks returned discontentedly to the right of his file and lay down with all due formality.

He had the extreme right of the line, and as daylight crept in, and the shadow of the hill shortened inch by inch, and the sunshine drew towards them, Brooks noted how every man in the command had scraped, pulled, and piled together a little heap of rubbish behind which he crouched.

The mist was rising all about them.

The irregular scanty blades of the veldt grass waved in a rather sharp morning breeze, and one by one, from the little veldt bushes scattered here and there, came the awakening songs of the birds breaking the stillness which until now had brooded everywhere.

The hill sloped gently up before them, and on its top there fluttered the silhouette of a small flag.

Where the hill made a sharp line against the sky, the line seemed angular, telling not of nature's curves but of entrenchments.

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To a man waiting for something wonderful to happen, especially to a man new at soldiering, time in a place like this passes slowly. It seemed hours before the daylight was strong and clear enough, and the mist had lifted sufficiently to permit Brooks to see now and then small moving objects on the apex of the hill.

It was not a long distance to the top. It was quite a little hill, only six or eight hundred yards at the furthest to the trenches. Brooks wondered how the good, wise General in command expected the men to make themselves little enough to be unseen; and "Oom Paul," away up yonder, behind the entrenchments, smiled in his whiskers, and confided to another, in his own guttural tongue, that those fools down there were like ostriches with their heads under a leaf.

Just as Brooks was feeling grateful for the warmth of the sun, and almost dropping off into a doze, away off yonder, on the other side of the hill, there was a pop, like some one opening wine. Then there was one on

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the top of the hill, and from within the entrenchments there arose a little puff of white smoke, and then there was another pop, and another, and yet another.

The man at Brooks' right shifted uneasily, and dropping his head between his hands, murmured to his neighbor, "There goes the bloomin' mountin' gun; the other blokes are doin' of 'em up."

Brooks thought of the command as of an audience at a theatre. He lay and listened to the popping of the little cannon, and watched almost breathlessly each streak of gray smoke and each bursting shell as far as he could see it. Then all at once, without any warning, the whole top of the hill seemed alive, as if with fire-crackers. There was no flame to be seen, no smoke, — that was all on the other side; and Brooks could see, if he could not hear, the Major chuckle at the thought that the enemy saw only the main body of the troops. It was a foolish thought.

The crackling had lasted almost incessantly for half an hour, when there came the sudden,

The Full-Back tells the Story 27

steady firing of Martinis, more distant but more clear; and almost instantly afterward the hill replied, but not towards the main body of the troops. The Major had been wrong!

A plunging fire ploughed up the earth before the tiny shelters of Brooks' own men. The little heaps, so diligently scraped and pulled and gathered together, were scattered like dust in a wind-storm, and then Brooks knew he was under fire.

He looked down to the right. The Major had risen to his feet, and with hands in his pockets was walking nervously up and down the line. The Major had told Brooks to lie down, and he had lain down. The Major had arisen, and Brooks arose also; and as he did so, the man on his left coughed, rolled over, and lay still.

Brooks knelt beside him, and as he knelt three or four little puffs of dust leaped up around him, and he arose from the man and walked away, — walked away quickly to the centre of the line.

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Over and over again Brooks repeated passages from the "Company School." Over and over again he repeated pages from that admirable work, "Hints for the Young Soldier." The dust spattered up, and now all along the line, here two men, there one, were crawling slowly, laboriously, out from the line, back into the veldt.

The Major's language became loud and expressive. All the officers were up now, moving up and down the line, gesticulating to themselves, but no one thinking of retreat.

The Major expressed strongly his cordial disapproval of the General in command. He expressed it to the other officers. He expressed it even to the men, but it did not help matters. Then suddenly, without any warning, the scattering fire became a volley, — not a simultaneous volley by command, but the strong firing at will, which is yet worse.

Perhaps thirty or forty men were down now, some lying quite still, others struggling back hunting for shelter.

Then a worse thing came, — at least it

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seemed worse to Brooks, — for a man shot on the ground is quite one thing, a man standing quite another.

Brooks was walking towards the centre of the line. In a perfunctory way he had drawn his sword and used it as a walking-stick, and walking towards him there came the fat, jolly little Lieutenant, his host of the night before. All at once the Senior Lieutenant's face grew gray, he put his hands up over his head, and closed his eyes, and reached, and reached, and reached for something to hold to like a drowning man.

Brooks ran to him, and grasped him around the shoulders. Then the Senior Lieutenant dropped forward a dead weight upon him, and Brooks laid him on the ground and knelt beside him, and put his flask to his lips.

The long, lank, angular captain of Brooks' company went up to the Major at a trot. "I say, sir," he said, "we can't stand this, you know! We can't hold the men down to this, they'll break or something! They'll dis-

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grace the corps! I tell you sir, we can't do it, you know!"

The Major braced back his shoulders, stuck out his chest, and said, "Return to your men, sir, we are going to obey orders." As the Major spoke, his arm dropped helpless to his side, and an instant later he whirled round and round like a teetotum, and fell upon his face, and coughed, and coughed, until the coughing grew fainter and ceased, and there was one less name on the V. C. list.

They turned him over, and laid him down quite gently under a little bush.

Brooks ran his eye down the line, and of the six officers who had come out with the command he saw but three standing, all standing with bowed heads, all with hands on sword waiting, waiting, Brooks thought, for their turns.

Over beyond the hill the rattle of the Martinis was incessant, and in the very midst of all the din Brooks came to himself like a man waking from a dream. A great fear seized him, and a choking sob, like the sobs

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of his childhood, rose in his throat, and before he knew it he was crying.

The angular captain of Brooks' company came up to him at a trot (it seemed to be his regular gait now), and seized him by the shoulder and shook him. "Damn you! This comes of sending babies to war. Shut up!" Brooks could not answer for his sobs; but he saluted, and no one knows what would have come next, but there was work now for the officers to do.

Following the example of a junior corporal, the men were struggling to their feet. Some were walking towards the rear, one or two even running. As they walked and ran, for it all came in a second, the spit, spit, of the fire flashes from the top of the hill grew louder and more frequent. Over beyond the hill the din rose into one loud cadence, like waves dashing against the hill, punctuated at short intervals by the pop of the mountain guns.

Then Brooks was among the men, — men whom he had not commanded until that day, men who despised him for a child. Revolver

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in hand, he ran, pushing them back, cursing, striking with his fist, driving them back with the flat of his sword. The very frenzy of war was in him. He would have shot any man who gave him any resistance.

There were but two officers now. The officers of Company D were all gone. There was only Brooks and his captain.

The sun had risen high, and all about on the almost crackling grass, face up in the scorching sunshine, men lay. Some still, in uncouth attitudes, some writhing yet, and calling out for water, for the water which had all been drunk hours before.

The men came back into line after a while. There was no use in running out onto the veldt. There was no escape there.

The first sergeant swaggered down the line, and told each man as he went that he "was n't afraid of any bloomin' Dutchman. If he had 'em down in the open, he'd lick 'em all, one after another."

Brooks' captain ordered him over to the other company to take command, and he

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turned and started to go. As he turned, he heard a gasp behind him, and there was the captain, more angular, more tall, more awkward than ever, staggering back and forth, one hand at his side, the other hand outstretched, his revolver dangling from its wrist strap and his sword upon the ground, while down his back, as he stood, there rushed a crimson stream from between his shoulders.

Brooks grasped him, and tried to hold him up. Only one idea was in the poor fellow's head now. "Shot in the back!" he said, "shot in the back! A disgrace to the corps! Shot in the back! Oh my God! My God! My God!" The last words died away in a guttural groan, and he lay limp over Brooks' arm like a sack.

When Brooks came to himself once more, out of a dream as it were, as he stood upright and looked at the little broken line of men at the left, he realized that he, Brooks Major, the captain of the school, was in command. He, an officer of twenty-four hours, in command of an isolated detachment of men away

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out on the African plains, outnumbered, outgeneralled, almost hopeless, and with all the responsibility resting upon him.

The Captain, who lay at his feet, motioned with his finger, and Brooks put his ear to the stiffening lips. "Hold the men," he gasped, — "hold the men all you can — as long as you can. Wait for your orders. Don't let the old corps dishonor itself. Stand by our colors. Wait — for — your — orders —" That was all, and the man who was shot in the back passed on.

The men had settled down now into stolid quietude. There was no hope, no thought for the next moment, only a low crouching to the earth, a flattening of their bodies, a straining of their eyes towards the hilltop, nothing more.

It was past noon. For some reason the fighting over yonder, over where the main body of the troops lay, had slackened.

As Brooks with his own hands loosened the sheath to the colors, and unrolled softly and reverently the tattered Union Jack, his

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thoughts went back to the old school, which he felt he would never see again.

He gathered together little clods of earth and roots of grass around the staff of the flag until it would stand alone, for he would not let the color sergeant stand to hold it. As the breeze, now scarcely more than a breath, gently fluttered the silken folds, all up and down the line there came a weak but hearty cheer, and Brooks' heart swelled within him, for he thought they were cheering the flag; but in an instant he saw it was not so.

Away out on the veldt, now half hidden in flying dust and now in clear sunshine, rode a man on a galloping horse. Brooks watched him with heart standing still.

The man sat close and low, with his body bent well forward and down to the neck of the horse. Around the end of the hill he swept, spurring hard, and then, when the speck of the horse began to grow larger, and Brooks knew that his orders were coming, the firing on the hill, which had wellnigh died out, began again in sharp, rhythmic volleys, some

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seconds apart, but constant and steady ; and all at once the galloping horse fell into a trot, and the trot slowed down to a walk, and the man on him began to disengage one foot as if to dismount, when all at once his hands went up, his legs straightened, the horse went out from under him, and a poor lone Lancer lay away out on the veldt with Brooks' orders in his pocket.

At Sandhurst they teach many things. They build excellent bridges out of telegraph poles, they float pontoons in water where the mud scarce settles before the next exercises begin ; but there is one thing which from time to time a soldier has to do which they do not teach at Sandhurst, — they do not teach men to think.

When Brooks realized that away out on the veldt lay his orders, that between those orders and him stretched a space of almost certain death, and that he was there in command, with the lives of nigh a hundred men in his hands (two hundred a few hours before), his courage failed him for an instant.

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Then with a jerk he came back to the spiteful fiery world around him.

He got down on his hands and knees cautiously, and flattened himself on the earth, full of the thought of his own preciousness, and crept over where the first sergeant of his company lay, flattened like a pannikin, behind a little bush. "I say, look here, Sergeant," he said; "those are our orders." The sergeant, much bedraggled, with a little dried-up crimson rivulet down his face, and one hand in his pocket because he could not get it out, saluted with the wrong hand, and said, "Yes, sir, our orders, sir."

Brooks stopped and thought a moment. "Look here, Sergeant, I am a good bit of a young 'un, and I haven't belonged to the corps long." The sergeant grinned. "So I want your advice, Sergeant. What do you think we had better do?"

The sergeant, as if on the cricket field, plucked and chewed a blade of grass reflectively, and said, after deep musing: "Well, sir, as you ask me, sir, I think we had best

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obey orders." Brooks groaned in spirit, and crawled away again.

Over on the other side of the hill there was only an occasional shot, and the sun was getting angular in the western heavens. Brooks did not know what to do. Finally he thought it out in this wise. "We were sent out here to make a distraction in favor of the main body of troops. When orders reached us, we were to go up and strike and bring those Johnnies over this side, and let the General walk up the other. *That* is what we were to do when the orders came. The orders have n't come, but they started, they are out there now on the veldt, and I can't get them."

Brooks rose and walked out to the front of the men, held his new sword up over his head, the sword that we fellows had given him, and stood as if on parade. "Company, attention!" The men held up their heads, and looked towards him. He turned to the first sergeant, and said, "Sergeant, form up the men!"

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The men rose from the ground, wondering. They were past fear now, and as they arose the ripple of shots broke out again, and some of them never stood up entirely.

Then, in the face of that fire, Brooks fixed bayonets, swung into company front, and turned once more to face the men; and this is what he said: "Sergeant, bring those colors to the front. Give them to me. We are going up there to give those Johnnies a shove. Every man play close up to the ball, and don't forget good old England!"

He turned, waved his colors once, threw his sword away, and started up the hill,—started up the hill in the face of a sea of fire, with scarce a hundred men behind him,—up in the face of over three thousand.

Over the gradual rise they swept, with a short, sharp cheer, dropping men at every step. Brooks ran well ahead,—one arm hanging loose at his side, the colors pointed forward,—ran with the strong springy run of the football player, well ahead of his men, with the sergeant next behind him, followed by

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seventy-five men, followed by fifty, followed by thirty, up to where the hill became steep, and where some went on their hands and knees to follow and never rose again.

Up the final slope he went, followed by fifteen. Up to the parapet, with the Union Jack advanced, with the good old school-cry on his lips, "Play up close to the ball! On the ball!" With his heart in football, with never a thought of battle, until he reached almost the top of the parapet, and strange faces looked down upon him, — faces with deep-set lines, and blue-gray eyes looking along rifle barrels. Then he fired his pistol into those faces once, twice, three times, and for the first time that day Martinis cracked on the windward side of the hill.

The next instant Brooks staggered to the top of the parapet, the Union Jack waving. The staff came down with a punch into the sandy soil, and twenty rifles barked and snarled under his nose.

The few men who had been behind him turned and ran, and dear old Brooks, the

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captain of the team, plunged limply down head-first among the sea of men within the trench, and alone, unnoted, unthought of, the Union Jack, without a man to hold it, fluttered grimly from the hilltop of the Boers.

The shadows of the veldt bush were long. A scattering fire had burst out again on the opposite side of the hill, and now out over the parapet there swarmed a motley crew of half-clad grimy fellows, big, bony, and strong.

As the sun dipped, and the quick twilight of the African autumn spread over the land, a little ring of desperate men, close huddled together, guns and wagons abandoned, retreated across the plain, driven steadily all night, back towards the coast, back towards the spot where the sun rose, struggling, fighting, cursing, always driven back, carrying with them disaster, sorrow, and disgrace to the British arms.

Up on the hilltop, empty now save for the silent forms that lay here and there, or for some angel of mercy who flitted from tangled group to group with water-can, up there in

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the light of the moon, with his face to the ground, lay Brooks, the Captain of the School, our Brooks who had always led us to victory.

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Who will forget the day when the dear old "Head" came into the sixth form room, with a suspicious redness about his eyes, with his head hung low, and his hands limp by his side, and said, as the fellows all gazed in wonder: "Gentlemen, the sixth form is dismissed. A battle has been fought, and Mr. Brooks is killed in action"?

Who among us will forget that other day, nine months later, when once more the fifteen was lined up against the "Royal Naval," and the boundary flags fluttered, and we thought we were going to face defeat, — who, I say, will forget that day, when, just as the ball was about to be put in play, the sun crept out from under the winter clouds, and out from behind the pavilion, walking slowly, leaning on a cane, with blue glasses on his eyes, head bowed, and shoulders bent, there came to us — Brooks Major!

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Sore wounded, crippled for life, just in the day before, by ship from Africa, nursed back into health by Boer women, with honorable wounds all in front to the number of almost a score, Brooks, our Brooks, came back to us, and walked up to the middle of the field, and stood by the ball at the kick-off, and raised that good old voice, strong yet in the old chant, "Play up close to the ball."

THE UNRECORDED CROSS



THE UNRECORDED CROSS

THE Seventh Regiment armory was all aglow. Outside a spattering March rain, driven sharp against the window-panes by an impatient east wind from the Banks, made the night seem in dismal contrast with the warmth and comfort in the great drill hall.

The regiment was formed. The adjutant took six paces to the front, saluted and reported to the Colonel, and the Colonel began one of those quick series of orders, the sharp, snappy swing and minute detailed execution of which have for so many years made the Seventh Regiment the pride of the land.


There were important visitors that night, — two or three military attachés from Washington, a senator, a city boss, a great musician, and an Englishman.

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The Englishman was The Guest, the other men were incidentals. The Englishman was none other than Colonel the Right Honorable Sir James Beauchamp, K. C. B., R. E., V. C.

Sir James Beauchamp was not impressive. He was chiefly noticeable by reason of an all-pervading air of *savoir faire*. He was not large, he was not broad, he had not a high forehead, and he did not walk peculiarly erect. On looking at him one saw first his varnished shoes, then his spats, and then the eye leaped to his mustache. They were the three noteworthy characteristics of his outer man. It needed the pages of the Blue Book (or a file of the "Times" would do) for one to form a due and proper opinion of Sir James. One could hardly believe that he had outrageously distinguished himself in the Abyssinian campaign, until one had read it several times.

The regiment came to "parade rest" and was dismissed. The officers rallied round their Colonel, who, justly proud of his boys



in gray, began with all speed to present them one after another to the Honorable James.

This excellent individual grasped each one strongly by the hand, and said some kindly word as they filed by, but failed, as they all well noted, to make any mention of the regiment or its units.

Now the Captain of Z Company was naturally very far back in the line, and by reason of being very far back in the line the Captain of Z Company had more time to think than the others. Being of no bashful mould, the resolution grew upon him, as the unintroduced end of the line became shorter, to draw some statement as to the military worth of the Seventh Regiment from the Lion, at whatever cost. Deftly, therefore, the Captain of Z Company placed his First and his Second Lieutenants before him in the line, and gracefully brought up the rear.

“Very happy to meet you!”

“Delighted to make your acquaintance, I am sure!”

“Pleased to know you, sir!” said the Lion

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unto the Captain of Y Company, and to the First Lieutenant of Z Company, and to the Second Lieutenant of Z Company.

"This," said the Colonel of the Seventh, — "this, sir, is our youngest company commander. He has worn his captain's straps but six months. We regard him as a very promising soldier. Permit me to introduce to you Captain Frere."

The Lion's right hand was somewhat wearied, but being a man of courage he extended it with all alacrity, not without relief at noting that the end had come. He murmured once again his gratitude at the pleasure of meeting — "I beg your pardon? Oh, yes — Mr. Frere," and raised his head and was preparing to turn away, when behold the Captain of Z Company spoke.

"You will excuse me, I trust, Colonel Beauchamp, if I am taking a liberty as a young and ambitious soldier in asking, What do you think of the Seventh? What do you think of us as soldiers? What do you think of us as an organization? What do you think of the regiment as a unit?"

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The Lion was cornered. He had the most strict regard for the truth. It was a tradition in his family, wherein his family differs from certain others of its class. Again, the Lion would have much preferred to say something pleasant, — it is so much less trouble than to be disagreeable, so much easier, so much better form. To speak his thoughts was not one of the Lion's characteristics, but he believed, in the moment of hesitation which followed the rash speech of the Captain of Z Company, that he had hit upon the right thing to say.

“Ah — er — ah! Well, you know, I think it is all very pretty, very pretty, very graceful, very nice, charming armory, capital floor.”

It is a tradition in the Seventh Regiment that Frere frowned upon the British Lion.

“Excuse me, sir,” he said, “I asked you what you thought of our qualities as soldiers, what you thought of the regiment as a unit.”

The British Lion dislikes to be annoyed.

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It may be possible to twist his tail, but not without causing him to frown. The Right Honorable Colonel Beauchamp frowned.

“Well, well, since you press me, Captain — ah — ah, Captain Frye” — “Frere,” interrupted the Colonel of the Seventh — “Captain Frere, since you press me, I will say that I regard you as very pretty play soldiers, very pretty uniform, the same uniform that was the fashion about the time of my father. I regard the Seventh Regiment as executing its drill uncommonly well, quite like dancing the cotillion, I assure you.

“I dare say, now, that your men would all be able to march five miles up Fifth Avenue and back again ; but as for soldiering, Captain Frere, as for service, as for work, as for usefulness, they would n’t do at all, sir. Too much equality, too familiar intercourse between man and officer, too much silk stockings and cigarettes. There is n’t a man among you that would be much good in service, without a long period of training.”

Frere flushed hotly. A hasty and inhos-

pitable answer was upon his lips, but he suppressed it, turned on his heel, and marched to the company officers' room.

The dear old Colonel of the Seventh was incensed too. It was, he thought, scarcely good form on the part of a man, however privileged, to say such things of his entertainers, and it is probable that the matter would not have dropped, had not the Lion, with all that suavity which came of a long line of court-trained Beauchamps before him, turned towards the chief of his hosts and said: "I trust, Colonel, that you will pardon an old soldier for reading a youngster a lesson. I have no doubt, Colonel, that your men are all very excellent volunteer soldiers, very excellent indeed, comparing very favorably probably with any of our volunteer regiments; but as an old soldier, a soldier of the active list, a former cavalry officer, and even now having the honor to be actively connected with her Majesty's army, I deemed it my right, and indeed my duty, to be somewhat harsh with a very young officer who has much to learn."

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The Colonel of the Seventh accepted the explanation, reserving his doubts for home consumption ; and thereupon he and his Guest, and the incidentals from Washington, including a Russian officer, who had been highly delighted at seeing the Lion cheeked, adjourned to the Colonel's room, where the Colonel's own famous brand of Imperials was produced, and other refreshments set forth.

Frere, in the company officers' room, was "mad clear through," as the Junior Lieutenant put it, — mad because he said the Seventh had been insulted, — mad because he had been given a fall, — mad because he was intensely American, — mad because he thought he had received a personal affront.

The other fellows, from the Captain of A to the Captain of Y, were older and cooler, and knew that much of what the Lion had said was true ; therefore they chaffed Frere unmercifully, both from the standpoint of the Seventh and from the personal standpoint.

Suddenly Frere turned on them, pale and angry. He advanced to the great oak table

with a stride, and brought his fist down upon it with a force more vigorous than formal. "Look here," he said, "I tell you this is an outrage on the Seventh. We are as good soldiers as any on earth, and I'll back that statement up with a bet — no, I will make it two bets."

"I will bet you, first, that I, as a unit of the Seventh, can win that same V. C. that Beauchamp wears on his chest, inside of nine months from the time I can find my way to the front in one of England's little misunderstandings. That is one bet ; any gentleman like to take me for five thousand ?"

The Captain of A Company was white-haired. He bit off the end of a cigar with great deliberation, and missed fire on three matches. Nobody else said anything ; they waited for him.

When he had lit the cigar, and puffed three or four times, he looked over to Frere, and said, "Don't get so excited, youngster."

"All right, Captain," said Frere, "I respect your age. You can say what you like to me.

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Now I'll offer you my other bet. Any man can take up one or both, or neither, just as he likes ; but as I am going to do this thing in any case, I will offer odds five thousand to one.

"I will call on Colonel Beauchamp before to-morrow night, and tell him just what I have told you, and offer him the same bet you fellows have n't the courage to take."

Without further words, or waiting for any more of the caustic satire of Company A, Frere made for the door, went to his dressing-room, got into "Cits," and swung off with quick strides to the Knickerbocker.

Frere was a Southerner, — a Southerner by birth, but not by descent. Tradition had it that his family had landed in New York prior to the American Indians. Chance, rather than good judgment, we believe, had induced his very distant paternal ancestor to select as his own particular potato patch a certain section of Manhattan Island now in great demand for office buildings, wherefore Frere was a millionaire, as his father had been before him.

His father had been a "copperhead." He was one of those New Yorkers who strongly and steadily protested from 1860 to 1865 that the South was abused; and to emphasize his conviction, he had removed early in 1861 to New Orleans, drawing his income from the North and spending it in the South. In New Orleans Frere had spent his boyhood. In New Orleans his father had died, and now the present possessor of Manhattan millions had come back to the old island and made it his home, because New Orleans was n't big enough, and the quality of her cigars was inferior.

He belonged to the leisure class, but he had no leisure. His day commonly began at ten and ended at three; but he was not altogether spoiled, and he was not dissipated.

At eight o'clock the next evening, Frere presented himself in spotless raiment, beautiful to behold, at the desk of the Brevoort House, and sent up his card, with a pressing request for an interview, to the Right Honorable Lion.

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The Lion had repented of his petulance of the night before, and received him cordially. This made Frere's errand difficult, and he seemed to himself in thorough bad form. He succeeded, after much struggle with himself, in communicating all of the impudent things which he had undertaken to communicate, and he ended by offering the Right Honorable Lion the very pleasing wager of ten thousand even (he had doubled the stakes since the night before) that he, Frere, the millionaire and man of leisure, could win the V. C. in nine months after he succeeded in getting to the front, — "in one of your rows with savages," as he put it.

The Honorable Colonel did not tell Frere he was rattled. The Beauchamp family rattled nothing except dice. Instead, he looked very grave, very dignified, and for the first time soldierly. When he replied, it was eminently in good form.

He said: "Really, Mr. Frere, your remarks are quite startling. I have a keen appreciation for your sporting instinct. Your desire

to make wagers is quite American. I regard you as novel, very novel. I shall retain you as a pleasant memory when I return home. Your courage is undeniable. May I ask, Captain, whether you feel financially able to undertake the little matter — er — wager which we have discussed, or rather which you have propounded ? ”

Frere had expected this, and replied by saying that he owned a little plot of ground down town, about half a mile each way, which was tolerably encumbered by large buildings.

The Honorable Colonel said, “ Very well, if you don’t mind,” — here he drew a little memorandum book from his pocket, — “ if you don’t mind, we will just make this little transaction a matter of record.”

“ And now,” continued the Lion, “ that our business is transacted, Captain Frere, I may say that I have taken quite a fancy to you. I almost think that in an emergency you might win that V. C. Of course you have lost your bet, but in consolation I would suggest that you spend the remainder of the

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evening with me. I say, in consolation, because I am an old soldier and you are a young one, and I can tell you something about soldiering."

The door to the Honorable Lion's reception room was open, and an hour later there passed down the corridor the Captain of Company A, Seventh Regiment, together with several of his regimental associates, some of whom were young; and these hastened with all speed to the armory, and delightedly informed the few stragglers who were in attendance in the company room that Frere of Z and the Honorable Lion had recovered from their spat, and were as thick as thieves.

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Three weeks later, that mentor of the polite world, the society column of the "Daily Shout," announced as follows:—

"Captain Edwin Frere of the Seventh Regiment, well known on the avenue as one of our most delightful millionaires and men about town, sailed for Liverpool on Saturday, on the Cunard steamship 'Ratalonia.' At the Knickerbocker

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it is said that his absence will be for an indefinite period. We have it from a reliable source that he has gone to Italy to buy tapestries for a new and ultra-magnificent mansion which he is soon to erect on the Park Front. We wonder who the lucky young woman will be. More information on this score will probably be found in the Daily Shout's next Sunday's issue."

Mr. Edwin Frere sailed on the "Ratalonia," and arrived in Liverpool, but at that point the reporters lost him. Mr. Edwin Frere did not arrive in London, but there did arrive in London, by third class, about the time that Mr. Edwin Frere ought to have got there, one John Smith, a shabby-genteel young man who smoked two-shilling cigars.

This young man had some few lingering traces of foreign origin. His shoes were less thick soled, and his general appearance was somewhat more refined than that of the average Englishman of his apparent social standing.

John Smith sought a third-rate hotel, and found it with vast difficulty. He carried a

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large and very heavy bag, and, to his credit let it be said, he carried it easily. He went to his room, and an hour later the astonished boots saw a regular “’owling swell” issue from that same room, march down the stairs and out into the street, — not John Smith, but Edwin Frere.

In his accustomed garb and individuality he felt at ease, and it needed but a brief time for him to learn from the papers, and from the talk of every urchin on the street, that there was going to be a row with the black fellows, that England had taken up the cudgels for the Boers, that troops were ordered to the Cape, and that a detachment had already received marching orders.

Frere sought out a book-stall, and purchased a copy of the United Service Gazette, wherein he read two items which were of great interest to him.

The first item was as follows : —

“General Sir Arthur Knight goes east to the Cape to-morrow, together with a detachment of four hundred men of the Wales Borderers, to take

command of the punitive column about to advance into Zulu land. Her Majesty's transports, Rampoona and Saragossa, are coaling at Portsmouth, and will receive a detachment of the Seventeenth Lancers, a company of the Royal Engineers, the second battalion of the Royal Wales Borderers, and one company of the second battalion of the Royal Rifle corps. All of these troops go forward immediately, and will be placed under the command of Lord Chelmsford on their arrival at the Cape."

A little further down in the same column Frere read : —

"Colonel Sir James Beauchamp, K. C. B., R. E., V. C., has just been appointed chief of staff to Sir Arthur Knight, for service in Zulu land. He goes forward in the second transport."

A little further down again : —

"It is reported, on reliable authority, that Prince Napoleon has tendered his services for the Zulu campaign."

The urchin, who rescued from annihilation the lighted cigar which Frere threw away after reading all this, claimed ever thereafter to have smoked with the Royal Family.

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Frere did not run to that third-rate hotel, which he had found with such difficulty, but, as the little boys say, he "walked fast."

He entered into the room of Mr. John Smith, and in an amazing short space of time Mr. John Smith issued out again, and proceeded with leisurely step towards Regent's Park, which, as all good Londoners know, is ever dotted about with recruiting sergeants.

To one of these models of dignity John Smith applied himself with much diligence and many administrations of beer, until that worthy, who in the beginning strove to impress upon him the superior claims of her Majesty's Second Essex Regiment, at last consented to introduce him to a "pal" of his who was a recruiting sergeant in the second battalion of the Wales Borderers, which was sending two companies out on the second transport to the Cape. This respectable sergeant, however, urged pathetically, even at the last moment, that John Smith had much better join her Majesty's Second Essex and

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be quartered at the Tower, and not "go looking up no bloomin' assageis."

John Smith took the Queen's shilling in the second battalion of the Royal Wales Borderers, on condition strictly imposed that he should be entered on the company book of one of those two companies which were going forward first.

The die was cast. He was going to the front to win his wager. For the last time he arrayed himself in varnished boots and silk hat. For the last time he signed his name to a cablegram, which told New York that Edwin Frere, millionaire and man of leisure, would n't be back in Gotham for two years.

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At the Portsmouth dockyard the Home Station Band was playing to quick time "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

The horses of the Lancers were slung in, steam was blowing with a rumbling gurgle from the high-pressure pipes of her Majesty's transport "Rampoona," and companies C

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and F of the Royal Wales Borderers were swinging up the gang-plank in good alignment at the new quickstep.

John Smith was the third man from the end in the next to the last line of Company F. The Honorable Lion, who stood on the bridge, resplendent, did not recognize his young friend of New York, and would n't have recognized him had he been able.

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The morning was sultry. The rocks which strewed the kloof leading northward from Rorke's Drift were hot, even early in the morning, with the heat left over from the day before.

What dried grass there was, was pounded into dust, — light vegetable dust, which rose into the air in whirling clouds at every step.

The long, uneven, straggling column swung out into the veldt, at not more than two miles an hour. The bullocks strained heavily, three yokes inspanned on each wagon, as the heavy running gear of the provision and ambulance train cut deep into the yielding dust.

Six companies of the Wales Borderers were there, and so was John Smith, and so was the Honorable Lion. John Smith marched in heavy ill-fitting service-boots which hurt, having been built for English rather than American feet. John Smith had confided to his corporal that he could stand in one of those boots and turn around with ease.

Up to John Smith's file there rode the Honorable Lion, sitting his horse erect and strong, controlling it with the hand of understanding. The horse reared and plunged; the Honorable Lion, seated as if in a Morris chair, addressed himself to the very young subaltern who controlled the destinies of John Smith, along with the rest of his file.

"Look here, you sir," said the Honorable Lion, "keep your men in better line. Close up on the column. Get some style into them, sir. Make them step up smarter. You will have to read a lesson to that raw recruit over there. We shall want soldiers here, sir." The raw recruit was John Smith.

All day they lumbered along over the

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veldt, — six companies of the Royal Wales Borderers, three files of the Royal Engineers, a company of the first battalion of the Royal Rifle Corps, and the wagon train.

They were all boys together, smooth-faced to a man, hardly a sergeant even that had seen service. They were plucky, honest, good-natured English boys, full of fun and frolic, full of love of sport, all hoping for a row.

Tied to the top of baggage wagons, protruding through the canvas here and there, were cricket-bats. It was even arranged between F Company of the Borderers and the lone company of the Rifles, that on the morrow, if they didn't move camp too early and could find a flat place, they would play the first innings of a somewhat over-postponed cricket-match.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the column was halted near some muddy springs. A skirmish line was thrown out in a perfunctory way. The baggage train was out-spanned and laägered into an irregular square.

Tents went up with boisterous shouts and much horse-play, for her Majesty's military authorities believe in discipline only where discipline is necessary.

The company cooks went to work on fresh beef from the settlements, and soon half a hundred tiny smokes were rising upward towards the point where the sky was all aflame with the reflected brilliance of the setting sun.

The day had been blisteringly hot. The pith helmets had been all that saved the column. Even so, a man had dropped out of almost every file, and the doctors were busy with heat prostrations.

The skirmish line advanced two miles in all directions over the plain, but found it all quiet. One detachment did indeed capture a small black boy, whose answers proved to be quite unintelligible.

John Smith was having rather a good time of it, all but his feet. He liked soldiering. He liked roughing it better than he had thought he would, and already he was on

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good terms with all of the men in his company.

So, with half a dozen others, common, honest, low-caste young Englishmen, he sat around a little fire of grass-roots, as the black African night stole in upon them, and smoked and listened, and held his peace, for he could n't talk as they did.

The skirmish line had been drawn in. Double sentries were not posted. The patrol made its rounds only once an hour. Half the men in the guard-tent were asleep, the others smoking. The great white African moon, three times as big as the moon we know, crept up into the sky, and brought with it a little breeze, cooling the air.

The dry veldt grass rustled and whispered, and told all sorts of secrets, but not the one great secret that out yonder on the veldt, six miles away, flat on their faces, in a great stone-bound kloof, lay six of Cetewayo's Impis.

Taps came late that night. The column had not shaken together. Frere preferred

sleeping in the open air, to the stuffy closeness of the little service-tent with six men in it, principally because the men insisted on shutting out all the air.

So he lay down on the ground, — dry ground, dusty and hard, — and went to sleep with the great moon staring him in the face, full of thoughts of the V. C. to be won.

By and by he began to dream. He was dining at the Knickerbocker. He had just ordered champagne. There was the Captain of Company A of the old Seventh, with two or three others of the younger crowd. The champagne was brought. The waiter opened it with a flourish and a loud pop. For the first time Frere noticed that the club dining-room was full of men who had ordered champagne. Dozens of bottles were being opened. He was astonished. He had not seen so many men before. He arose half startled from his chair, and then he awoke.

It seemed to him, in that brief instant before he came to himself, that perhaps there had been something in religious teaching, after

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all, that he had died, and gone whither he would not. The night was hideous with one great throbbing howl. There was a spatter of fire-arms, a rushing of men here and there, loud shouts from officers, yells from the men, a flash of little bright streaks across the sky. He wondered what they were.

He shook himself together, and finally realized, for it all came in a second, that the camp was attacked, — that they fought to repel an attack, — that the blacks must be after them, — that it would take but a moment, they would soon drive them off.

He got down on his knees, and crept for his rifle. Another man was creeping close to him. The other man had on only his trousers and loose flannel shirt. He was barefooted, and, as he crept, he swore.

All at once he lay down flat on his face, and up between his shoulders there stood a great quivering shaft of wood, and the man lay still. That was an assagei.

Frere found his rifle at last, and came up on to one knee, and loaded and fired four

shots, unaimed, unthinking, out into the black darkness that hung around the camp.

There seemed to be no order, no system, no gathering into compact bodies. Some of the men were still rushing about, and some lay still. All at once there sprang past him, clad only in riding trousers, his bald head glistening, his noteworthy mustache all a bristle, the Honorable Lion, and above the tumult all around Frere heard the words over and over again, yelled, shrieked, above everything, —

“Rally by fours! Rally by fours! Get your backs together! Close in around the flag! Rally by fours! Damn it, don’t stand here and be killed! Rally, I say!”

Frere rallied, and four others with him. As he looked through the glimmering moonlight, all over the field he saw little knots of men rallying by fours, forced into order by one commanding voice. Some were separated wide apart from others, and again others were forming into pyramids, forced together, half kneeling, half standing, waiting for what was to come.

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Then out of the darkness close to the ground, like a blacker blackness, there came a great rush of heaving bodies like a tidal wave, and a dull roar of sound which rose and died, and rose and died down and sprung up again into a rhythmic chant, the Chant of Running Impis.

Over the camp that wave swept, up and over the little pyramids, beating them down, trampling them under foot, falling on bayonets, struggling, rushing on.

The shots were few, and their noise was drowned in the Chant of Running Impis.

Frere was beaten down with the rest, and they passed over him. And when he rose he could not rally by fours, for there was no one to rally with.

Over among the snorting bullocks, where the wagons were laägered, he saw a few figures running together, and in the middle of them he saw a bald-headed man with bristling mustache running like a child with a hobby-horse, and his hobby-horse was the flag.

Frere wrenched a shaft from his shoulder,

and wondered how it could go in so far without hurting any. Then he doubled over to the group, and the next instant he and the Right Honorable Lion were kneeling side by side, their backs to the flag.

There were perhaps a hundred of them left. The rest lay out in the veldt grass, or the dust which had been grass an hour before, and over to the westward, barely lost in the darkness, there rang out louder, more defiant, more fierce than ever, the Chant of Running Impis.

The chant came nearer, and then just before the rushing human tide struck the little group around the wagons and the flag, Frere saw with his own eyes that incident of Isandlwana which has been made in later days into a classic poem.

With the column there was a certain officer, and that officer had a little son, and by some strange un wisdom that little son had gone into the veldt with the column.

Now there was still alive between the wagons one solitary horse, and this officer

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ran in between the wagons all in an instant, and dragged the horse out, foaming and trembling, and grasped the boy and threw him into the saddle, and pointed with his sword out into the darkness where Rorke's Drift lay, and commanded over and over again: "That way, that way, straight, straight as you can go. There is safety! Go quickly!" The boy drew himself up straight, stopped crying, flung himself off on the other side of the horse, and struck it a heavy blow across the flank. The boy saluted, and the father knew that he would not leave him.

The cloud of human darkness drew in upon them. The song of the impis rose in a strong crescendo, and the men around the laäger drew closer together their scant line, and fired blindly into the darkness whence came the song. The tide did not roll across them this time. What savage will kill, when he may torture?

A great black seething wall of men halted itself in a circle around them, and for two or three moments the Martinis talked to

some purpose, whilst half-way betwixt the little hopeless band of Englishmen and their slayers, at intervals apart, heedless of rifle-balls, stood the ringed men of the Zulus, telling in uncouth guttural tones, for all the world to hear and with all gruesome detail, how dogs are killed.

The darkness was lifting a little. Over towards the east a long red streak gave warning of the day of execution. Even as that blood-stain on the sky appeared, as if at a word of command, the black tidal wave gathered force again and broke into a flow of motion, and rolled over and over the little laäger to the tune of chanting impis.

There were smothered shots, there were stifled cries, and here and there for an instant some little group of three or four braved the torrent with the strength of desperation, and fought blindly, madly, fiercely, with blood-clouded eyes, with whatever weapon came first to hand.

Of one of these groups was Frere, beaten down in the first rush, trampled on, smothered,

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crushed by the passage of bare horny feet. He came to his knees again when the tide rolled by, and found himself one of three. One of three, with not another white man besides them in twenty yards or more, save those who lay still in little groups and tangles like the fallen trees of the forest. From his knees Frere struggled to his feet, and looking whither the wave had rolled, he saw its black units forming into little groups, groups of forty, fifty, or a hundred, and each group swarmed and leaped and yelled and raged around some little knot within its centre, just as ants fight and tumble around a dead insect. Frere knew that the nucleus of each of those raging knots of tangled black men was a unit, or perhaps two or three units, of an army that had been.

Sir James Beauchamp, a company cook, and Edwin Frere stood back to back alone; with set teeth, heaving breath, and fingers dripping blood, half clad, almost unarmed, they stood alone, and around them snarled and yelped a herd of black men.

Frere's rifle was gone. He bore no trace of the Queen's uniform. He stood unarmed. A great black giant dashed forward from the circle around them, thrust his face close into Frere's, and raised on high with both hands a short-stemmed, broad-bladed, stabbing assagai.

Frere was not a coward, but he shut his eyes, and even as he did so, he felt the sharp, spiteful spit of burning powder in his face, and a voice at his ear said, "A warm corner, my young friend." Frere opened his eyes. The black fellow was down, and it came to him like a dash of cold water that there was left a fighting chance for life, and a chance perhaps to save the flag, — the flag which was not his, but which he had sworn to fight for.

It takes minutes to tell what happened in seconds. The blacks crowded in upon them now, for most of the other little knots had been smoothed out, ironed down, made level with the plain, and so the blacks coming from them pressed in on their neighbors around Frere's group, and drove them forward, until

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the three men stood close-packed in a mass of their enemies, so close that even an assagai could scarce be used.

As they stood thus, like a throng at the gallery entrance of some theatre, Frere heard a groan behind him, and turning his head saw the company cook trying to fall forward with his head all crushed and battered by a knobkerrie, but held up by the crush around him. Frere coughed and grew sick, but with a convulsive effort he snatched from the dead man's belt the bayonet which had never been drawn, and holding it short, like a boxer prepared for an undercut, he pushed it by main force quickly time after time into the throng before him, pushed it as a cook skewers meat, pushed it time after time until there was built up before him and his comrade a little barrier of writhing black men.

It made a respite, a respite for a second. During that second Sir James with much good-will recharged the chambers of his revolver, and as he threw the chambers back Frere heard the little click of closing, as clear,

loud, and true as a man hears the click of his watch after setting.

The blacks were in no hurry to kill them. They were having good sport, the white men were playthings to toy with.

"I think," said the Honorable Lion, — "I think there won't be another rush after the next." Frere, half on his knees, groping for something that would burn powder with the only hand he could use, among the tangle of dead men, said with the calmness that comes before certain death, "Please God, there shall be more than one."

There was no song of *inpis* now, no battle-cry. The black fellows laughed as they rolled on to them, laughed like a child with a rattle. The Colonel's revolver spat like a cornered cat, spat death at every trigger-pull, and then the old man was seized by the throat and borne down on his knees and held there with a force which made him but a child, and slowly, very slowly a broad bright-bladed *assagei* was pressed against his chest.

It was his turn to close his eyes now, his

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turn to shut away the sun, he believed for the last time; and as he did so, the grip on his throat relaxed and he felt a struggle above him.

He opened his eyes with a jerk, and as he did so he saw Frere borne down upon him. He was crushed under a weight of men. The assagei that was meant for him found another mark, and Colonel Sir James Beauchamp, K. C. B., R. E., V. C., lay hurt but alive, and across him, face down, moving convulsively a little, gasping through blood-frothed lips, lay Frere.

"Tell the boys I did my best for the cross and — the — old — Seventh —" he gasped, — that was all! But Colonel Beauchamp heard it!

Back at Rorke's Drift, when the sun had almost come, a vidette at the mouth of the gorge had heard away out towards the sunrise sounds which he could not understand, sounds he thought, as he cocked his head, like the buzz of a hive of bees, and now and then a sound uncommonly like a shot.

His horse's hoofs struck fire from the shingly rock of the kloof bottom as he spurred back up the defile, with the word, "A skirmish out yonder." That was all, just a skirmish, he said ; and the Commandant doubled the frequency of the patrol, and turned over and slept again.

As the sun soared high over Isandlwana, it glistened white on the tents of an army, and white on the faces and helmets of six hundred dead. The impis had swept the tents clean. Some of them had donned red coats and helmets, like monkeys.

The dead they had stabbed over and over again, as is their wont, and then to the chanting of songs of victory the army swept southward, southward towards Rorke's Drift.

But men had been before them, men who had lain dead, so the Zulus thought, under a tangle of others.

Amidst the looting of the tents, amidst the drinking of what there was to drink, a Lieutenant of the Rifles and a Colonel of the Staff had crawled on hands and knees

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from beneath their heavy burdens, and lying flat almost amidst what cover there was, had worked their way out over the veldt into a friendly kloof.

Around the waist of one was tied a regimental Jack. When at last under cover these men had run, run bare of foot and bare of head, as men never ran before, run as a Beauchamp was said never to have run from an enemy, run lest Rorke's Drift should share the fate of Isandlwana.

Up to the picket-line of the Drift staggered these two gray-faced, red-stained men; and there at the stirrup of a vidette, face forward, they fell upon the grass like dead men.

Just a word of the wave that was coming, just a warning in the nick of time, and then they lay in hospital cots dead to the world, fighting in delirium the fight through which they alone had lived.

All through that long day and night they lay there, whilst the wave beat and combed and rolled back, and beat again, to the tune

of a spitting fire and the rapid burr of the machine-guns.

Over and over again in his delirium Beauchamp cried, —

“He shall have it. I say he shall have it. If I ever find him in this mass of men, he shall have it. If I have to stay here with him, I say he shall have it before I go.”

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And the third morning the relief came. The black tide receded, and scurried northward.

The acting Surgeon-General in the field, who had come in with the relief, held Colonel Beauchamp's hand in his, and as he listened to the tale of the awful disaster from the lips of his old comrade in arms, he noted that the little bag which Beauchamp always wore around his neck was torn open and empty. “Why, Colonel,” he exclaimed, “this fight has cost you your V. C., that you always wore for a talisman.” Very feebly the old man, a man so old he seemed a hundred now, raised himself on his elbow and pointed out

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towards the Place of Death through the dying light, and said in the feeble accents of the very old, "Out yonder, away out yonder where they lay all tangled, the dead together, out yonder in that horrible place, I have pinned it on the dead breast of the man who won it."

**THE WINNING OF THE
SWORD-KNOT**



THE WINNING OF THE SWORD-KNOT

THERE was a solemn conclave of misery in the buttery of "God's gift to Dulwich," a conclave so very miserable that the chances are that good old Henry Alleyn, Shakespeare's dearest chum, would, could he have foreseen it, have thought twice before endowing the college of the blue and the black.

Jones, the old buttery man, safely ensconced behind his tart and ginger-beer counter, listened with gaping mouth and sympathetic ear to the story which reached him very clearly from the little group of "men" in tasselled caps, — men who were too big and vastly too important in the school to buy of his sweet stuffs, but who did not disdain his ice in hot weather.

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Now these three men who honored the but-
tery by their presence on this occasion, and
who depressed Jones' spirits with their dole-
ful words, were none other than Ruggles
Primus, Ford, and Desmond. What need to
say more?

These names should be enough.

Lest, however, there should be some un-
fortunates who have not grown up under the
shadow of the glorious towers of Dulwich, it
may be well to state that Ruggles Primus
was acknowledgedly the leader of the sixth
form; that Ford was the captain of the
eleven, and that Desmond was the half-
back of the first fifteen.

Desmond did the talking. Ruggles, small,
snub-nosed, attentive, and Ford, long, angu-
lar, and admiring, did the listening.

"It's no use, you chaps, I'm an idiot, and
I always shall be. I might just as well chuck
the thing now as any time. First, I was
ploughed on the Indian Civil, and the Head
said there was no use trying for Woolwich, and
now, by Jove, I am ploughed for Sandhurst. I

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don't know what to do. I have got to make the army somehow. I did n't care so much when I was ploughed for the Indian Civil. I would n't have tried for it, anyhow, if it had n't been for the governor. About the last thing he said to me at Portsmouth was to try for the Indian Civil, and you fellows know I could n't go back on that, because — ”

Desmond was a manly fellow and strong, but his voice broke when he said it, and Ford clapped him on the shoulder in the strong-hearted way that boys have, and which serves them in place of tenderer sympathy.

“ Well, I could n't do it, you know. I did my best for the Indian Civil, but if the governor had n't gone down in Abyssinia just before the row was over, I never should have tried for it.”

The big manly shoulders came forward, and Desmond buried his face in his hands.

For a time the three sat all in a row, as dismal as three crows, on the discarded bench from the fourth form room, which served as a resting-place in the buttery.

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It was Ruggles who broke the silence. "You might try the back door, you know," he said.

"Sure a Desmond never went into the army by the back door yet," was the reply, "and besides I could n't get the tin. I never could pull through three years on a home station, and the man who makes the army through the back door in three years is cleverer than any Desmond."

There was a sudden shuffling of feet outside, a shrill uplifting of small boy voices, and a pack of the junior school burst into the but-tery. There were shrill demands for tarts and bulls' eyes, and the boy who had just made the third fifteen, and who had been in the habit of eating sweets the week before, called in a strong and manly voice for beer.

Among the crowd was Desmond's own fag, and the fag loved Desmond. "If you please, Mr. Desmond," he said, addressing his hero in a meek and respectful voice, — "if you please, sir, shall you get through Sandhurst in time to go out?"

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“Out where, young ’un?” asked Desmond.

“Out to the Cape, sir. Mr. McAlpine says more troops will be going all the time for the next year or more.”

Desmond jumped up, grabbed Ford with one hand, Ruggles with the other, and dragged them both, struggling, out into the crisp autumn air.

“I am going, you fellows!” he said. “By Jove, I am going! now! What’s the good of standing by this beastly grind? What’s the good of working like a horse with nothing ahead of me? The mater and the pater are both gone. Uncle Tom is somewhere up in the Indian hills, and that old duffer in London who gives me my tin has n’t anything to say about it anyhow. I am going, and nothing shall stop me, — neither ‘The Head,’ McAlpine, nor the captain of the school.”

In vain did Ruggles labor with him. In vain did he quote, with all the eloquence of the sixth form, all of the great authors who wrote in the dead languages. In vain did Ford remind him of his duty to the fifteen,

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and of the matches they could not fight without him. Desmond's mind was fixed, and he thrust his fists deep down into his pockets, and trudged straight across the playground to his schoolhouse.

He looked a manly figure as he went, a figure almost too manly to be still a boy in one of England's public schools.

Desmond was nearly twenty, yet it was only with the greatest difficulty and at the cost of many a headache that he had won an uncertain footing in the sixth form room. He had played on the fifteen for three years, and the oldest boy could not remember when Desmond was not on one of the teams. Tall, lithe, broad-shouldered, and narrow-hipped, he was a type of the wiry, athletic north country Irish gentleman, — a type of the race which has fought England's battles, legal and military, held the most important posts in England's colonies, and helped to rule her people, with never a thought of voting for Home Rule or the freedom of Ireland.

Back in the monitor's room leading out of

the house dormitory, Desmond packed in a little sole-leather trunk which had seen India, all of his few worldly possessions. His cricket-bat would not go in, and he called his fag and gave it to him. The foils which had served so often to win gymnasium battles for him were bent and forced in, for he could not bear to part with them. In went his boxing-gloves too, and the baskets of his single sticks.

The packing done, he crossed the playground again, and knocked timidly at the house of the Head Master. "Yes, Dr. Preston was in ; would Mr. Desmond please wait." Presently into the dim-lighted drawing-room, full of old books and musty antiquities, came the little, white-haired, gray-eyed man who ruled the boys of Dulwich with a rod of sympathy, and to him Desmond told his story, — told of his hopelessness, his loneliness, and his desperation.

Finally, when the woful tale was done, Desmond stood and bowed his head, and said : "So, sir, I have come to tell you that I

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am going to enlist. I can't go in by the back door. I can't make Sandhurst, and a Desmond could n't find bread and butter out of the army. I am a youngster yet. There is many a good man in the service who is a 'ranker,' and thought the more of for it."

Desmond had dreaded this final speech. He thought the Head Master would forbid his going, — and who can gainsay the denial of the Head Master? — but the old man's heart, and his eyes too, were full of more than sympathy.

He told Desmond that if his mind were made up, that if Dulwich must lose him, then he should go from Dulwich with the blessing and the love of its Head Master, and with the prayer—the old clergyman said "prayer" with true reverence—with the prayer that some day his name might be lettered in words of as true gold as that of any Sandhurst man.

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No Canterbury pilgrim ever carried more hopeful heart than Desmond, when his third-class carriage pulled into the old cathedral

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town. His grief and hopelessness had left him. With true Irish buoyancy he had painted to himself a glorious picture of how he would win his way on England's frontiers from trooper to lance corporal, and so from sergeant to the colors. Then in some glorious dash, amidst prancing horses and flying spears, he would win the eye and the praise of his leader, and a mention in the Gazette which should bring with it a sword-knot.

Canterbury is the depot of two cavalry regiments. One of these had been on service for many years, both battalions together, in the upland countries of India. The other regiment had one battalion out there too, and of the second battalion nearly half was already at the Cape, and the other at the depot recruiting.

Desmond needed no recruiting sergeant. What man with three stripes on his arm could teach a Desmond anything of the army? Straight to the barracks he went, over the same road that he had toddled as a little child by the side of his father, to see the

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colors trooped. Straight he held across the parade ground, past little groups of scarlet-shelled, pillbox-capped cavalrymen, with their skin-tight trousers and their little canes. Up the steps of the left wing, down the right-hand corridor, straight up to the third door, with its dingy yellow letters, well-nigh worn away by many a hand-push, — those yellow letters which proclaimed to those who could read them, "Recruiting Officer. Recruits apply here."

The recruiting officer sat at a very shabby desk. Sounds emanating from within, as the door creaked, suggested the removal of feet from the table, and Desmond's nose suggested burnt birdseye; but when he entered the young recruiting officer was seated erect at his shabby desk (a repair order for which had been duly filed the year before), with all the dignity which is incumbent upon all that touches Her Majesty's Service.

The recruiting officer was young, square-jawed, and heavy of brow. He had gray eyes that looked straight through a man,

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and, as Desmond expressed it afterward, riveted behind his head like a horseshoe-nail.

Desmond saluted with the salute of Crimean days which his father had taught him. "If you please, sir," he said, trying to catch the Kentish burr, — "if you please, sir, I would like to enlist in the Dragoons!"

The recruiting officer looked hard at him, and did not speak. The pause was painful, and Desmond repeated his statement.

Finally the recruiting officer spoke. "You are a gentleman, sir. You have no business in the ranks. Your name is Desmond. You play half-back on the Dulwich fifteen. I remember you perfectly. You gave me a hard fall last year, when Dulwich played our officers' scratch team. Don't deny it, sir, don't deny it. I know you perfectly."

The recruiting officer walked over to the door, and shot the bolt. "Now," he said, walking back to the table, "sit down, Desmond, and tell me all about it."

Desmond did not sit down. He stood up,

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pale, straight, and strong, and looked the recruiting officer squarely in the eye.

"A Desmond," he said, "never hides or denies his identity. I did give you a fall last year. If you had n't been so beastly awkward, you could have gone by me. I did not intend to deny my identity or give a false name. I have come to enlist. The school knows I am going to enlist. I have been ploughed at Sandhurst, but I have got to get to the front."

He got as far as that, when the other man held out his hand, and tapped him very gently on the chest.

"Look here!" he said, "what are you making such a row about? When that door," he pointed to the bolt, — "when that door is open, and any fellow of the mess who happens along can walk in, I am on duty. When that door is bolted, I am off duty. Now don't talk humbug. Tell me all about it. Sit down. Light a cigarette." He tossed some Egyptians across to him. "I will light my pipe again." Here the pipe was produced

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from the wastepaper basket. "We'll see whether you had better enlist or not."

Desmond subsided, apologized, sat down, and told his story.

If ever a man found sympathy in one who was almost a stranger, Desmond found it that day in a man who gave him unreservedly the friendship which he kept for the few, for Lieutenant Wall-Eddy read what Desmond was the moment he saw him.

So Desmond enlisted. Perfunctorily he went through the training of the riding-school, riding at the start almost as well as the riding-master who taught him. Automatically he bared his arm, day after day, and slashed one, two, three, four, five, left; one, two, three, four, five, with a blunt sabre, at imaginary savages, in the cavalry fencing-school.

In his second week of enlistment Desmond soundly thrashed the troop bully. After that the troop looked to Desmond to right the wrongs of the weak, and to fight the battles of the wronged.

There was a slow, uneventful, monotonous

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month at Canterbury, and then one day all in a minute there sprang into existence, around the Colonel's office, a scene of marvellous activity.

The adjutant came down the steps three at a time, and held his sabre hard in one hand, while he ran across to the guardhouse. The surgeon and the band-master, equal in stature but far apart in rank, went across the parade ground at a trot, towards their respective homes.

The veterinary bustled into the stable with an air of importance, and the two little monkeys of buglers, the pets of the battalion, went out behind the barrack house, and tossed up to see who should be Zulu and who Englishman, and fought the war out on the spot.

Desmond saw it all, and guessed the truth. Over to the barracks he went, up the stairs at a run, and straight across to his cot. He found a satchel beneath it, and took out his father's picture. He made a promise, as he sat on the bed looking into that face, which

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looked back at him firm and strong out of the photograph, and to his fancy promised him success.

The first sergeant clattered down the middle of the hall just as he had come from the guardhouse, and announced over the edge of his chain chin-piece: "Sure, boys, it's marching orders have come. The veterinary is looking at the horses' hoofs now, and we will be on the road to-morrow."

Merrily the trumpets played "Polly Put the Kettle on!" and when they ceased, the depot band began and marched before them to the tune which always tells so much, "The Girl I Left Behind Me!"

The painful whistle of the locomotive squeaked shrilly, and Troops "K," "M," and "O" of the First Dragoon Guards whirled away to Portsmouth and the transports.

It was a miserable passage, full of bad weather and seasickness. Horses died, the Colonel swore, and all the officers fell out with their brothers of the navy.

So, much sea-worn, but full of hope and

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fighting will, the home station troops of the second battalion of Her Majesty's First Dragoon Guards set foot, and shortly thereafter hoof, on the yielding soil of black Africa.

Sir Garnet had come out ahead of them, and welcomed their Colonel right joyfully, as the old gentleman, full of indignation at the transport captain, stamped up the steps to greet his new commander.

Up country, in the midst of the "African-der" range, Lord Chelmsford and two handfuls of men were forming a thin-set but defiant hedge between Cetewayo's thousands and the settlements. Every day a little fight was fought. Every day on some frontier vidette some men had fallen.

While Lord Chelmsford at the front pushed back, almost at the point of the bayonet, the swarm of black villains who tried to overrun him, the second relief column down at the coast, mighty in its newly imported confidence, was shaking down with all haste into field form.

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Five days Desmond had been ashore, when the first detachment moved out over the veldt road. It was a little detachment; a few of the Seventeenth Lancers, three companies of the Connaught Rangers, and two of the Royal Scotch Fusileers.

At the end of the procession, in all their prancing glory, with the clatter of steel chains, which had not yet been lashed with raw hide to make them silent, a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery made the dust of the little coast town fly as they pranced past.

With the Horse Artillery, sitting very straight, Desmond saw for the first time that young Frenchman, small, thin-faced, and handsome, who, fresh from Woolwich, had cast in his lot with the warriors of his temporary country, thinking perhaps that through a cloud of Zulu assageis he could carve his way back to the throne of the great Napoleon.

A few days later, it was Desmond's turn. More infantry was going forward, and with every little column of infantry, following as it did close upon its predecessor, there must

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of necessity be a detachment of cavalry for scout duty; therefore the great six-footers of the First Dragoons, Companies O, and M, placed foot in stirrup, and strung out on the veldt, travelling wide on either side to cover the infantry column.

Northward and westward they marched, — six days of slow travelling because of the winter rains, out into a country which was one day as flat as a table, and the next all ups and downs.

On the seventh day a long stretch of white tents ahead told of the great encampment. Before night almost the entire second battalion of the First Dragoons Guards were reunited, and Desmond was doing stable duty with the regularity of the home barracks.

For six days more, detachments of the relief column continued to pour in, until a goodly army was assembled and South Africa's relief was on the ground.

Another week, and small detachments began to leave them, — some going for a day or two, and then returning; others pushing

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out farther, and joining the advance, and so being merged with it for a time.

They were now in touch with Lord Chelmsford's column, and Desmond had ample opportunity to watch from day to day with constantly growing admiration the easy, loose-jointed horsemanship, and the all-pervading sangfroid of the various South African corps; the Mounted Rifles and the Cape Constabulary, clad all in quiet grays and dismal browns, but telling of dash and of service.

Then one day the whole relief moved forward, and the next a dozen little columns were thrown out in all directions, feeling here for touch with the main body of the enemy who was said to be flanking, here for isolated detachments of the advance.

Away off to the eastward, pursuing a body of black cattle-rushers, with one of these advancers, went forward Louis Napoleon, the Prince Imperial.

Another week, and there came to the camp that fearful story, which rang through all Europe like a thunder-clap: the ambushing,

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the noble fight, and the sad death of the pluckiest young Prince that France had bred for centuries.

Then there was fighting, — bitter, running fighting, in ten directions at once, — fighting in the dark, without knowledge of where to strike or how to act; fighting in small detachments; skirmishing along the river bottoms; struggling amidst the kopjes and the hills. At the westward a series of hand-to-hand tussles, irregular and desperate, were going on. The whole army was engaged; but when there was fighting to the west, Desmond's troop was to the eastward, and when to the sound of distant fighting Troop M of the Dragoons swam their horses over muddy streams to come in at the finish, the fighting always died out, and the row would be over before Desmond and his fellows could reach the line. So, with troops all around them, Desmond saw never a shot fired in anger, never an assagai in flight, but only the silent bodies on some recent field, only the assagai standing in the ground, or in flesh, with

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head buried, only the smeared and dust-bedraggled men who had just fought the fight.

The army had lost ground. Despite frequent efforts of flying columns, none yet had won to the ground where the Prince Imperial must be lying.

Back at the coast, in arrest, awaiting court-martial, was the man who had deserted his noble charge, and with the column were two or three of the troopers who had tried in vain to help him.

One morning, under a sun which was hot only at midday, a column moved out to the westward, with one of these troopers before it. All day it rode over the falling hills, down into the bottom land beyond; and as late in the afternoon it entered the hollow, with a wide marsh towards the sunset and hills to the north and the east, the column split up into little groups of four or five and spurred over the ground at a canter, searching for that which each man hoped he might not be the one to find.

Well out to the front, in this scattering fan-

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shaped advance, rode Desmond. Out over the wide flat, which spread towards the red of the sunset, he went at a sharp canter, until the ground grew boggy, and his horse sank at every stride to the fetlock ; and then, just as Desmond was raising his head, expectant that each moment would bring the brazen note of the recall, his eye caught, away out ahead on the marshy ground, dimly silhouetted against the gray background of the marsh grass, the wing whirl of a fluttering bird, and then another, and another.

Desmond had seen too many a stricken field already not to know the strange batlike flutter of the buzzard, and well he knew that where the buzzard came to earth, there one might find something grim and horrible.

He raised himself high and straight in his stirrups, raised his hand high over his head, and sent forth a shout, instinctively the good old Dulwich battle-cry.

Then, with body bent well forward, swinging gracefully from side to side with the true elastic swing which sends a horse ten miles

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farther than he could go under a civilian's seat, Desmond, lance corporal of the Dragoon Guards, spurred over the marsh land, scattering green-scummed water at every stride and closed in upon by all the men within hailing distance, Lieutenant Wall-Eddy in the lead.

As the men drew in on them, the great black birds rose slowly like drifting kites, slanted off a little, and alighted again, too lazy to go far.

Yet a little nearer the horsemen came, and then Desmond saw, as his horse snorted and flinched, a something white and limp and still, lying half on a tangle of marsh grass and half in the green-hued water.

As he looked, and his eyes adjusted themselves anew, he saw crumpled bunches of black and brown scattered in a little semi-circle around what his eye had seen first.

Desmond dismounted, cast the rein over his arm, and walked with bowed head forward,—forward until there lay at his feet that form which but a few short days before had been the centre, the heart, and the

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pulse-beat of a great nation's imperial pride. There he lay, as if he had gone on but the day before ; unmarred, unscathed, not disfigured at all, — the only man, Desmond heard afterward, who fell in action in the whole Zulu war that the enemy had left undefiled.

There was a little group of men there now, so silent, so still, so saddened, that one might almost have thought it a group in a country churchyard at home, but for the red glowing African sky to the westward, and the cry of the pau in the bushes.

How plainly one could read the story !

Yonder on that tongue of hard, high land, leading out into the marsh, was where he had run, fleet of foot, seeking a point where he might stand at bay.

Then the hard land tapered off into the marsh, and the mud had risen around his knees, and the going had been hard and slow. Those javelin shafts standing a foot high out of the mud yonder told where the foe had come to casting distance first.

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Then he had floundered on this way, breathless, hopeless, defiant, unyielding.

Here, with this little marsh bush at his back, with mile upon mile of waving veldt grass under his eye, with his own great throbbing empire that loved him thousands of miles away to the westward, here he had stood, revolver and sword in hand, teeth set, breast heaving, — stood at bay and faced them as the stag faces a pack of hounds.

What a brave story of struggle, of strength, those eleven black bodies told, as they lay, face down, half buried in the mud !

How eloquent were the little copper cartridge cases lying so clean and new and bright, to the number of a dozen or more around him ; and “ Why,” Desmond wondered over and over again, “ why had not the sword been a good sword instead of breaking short off four inches from the hilt, leaving that ragged broken stump in the nerveless hand that had trusted it ? ”

Away out in the gray where the sky and the plain were one, long, brazen, and harsh,

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came the blaring notes of the recall. In the west, as if at the sound, a great red ball sank down behind the hills, and the world was dark, and the light of an empire was gone.

They lifted him tenderly and gently, as soldiers can, and took him home.

Lance Corporal Desmond, Desmond of Dulwich, had found all that was left of the Prince Imperial.

Then there was fighting again, sharp, hard, running fighting. The tide had turned. The iron hand and the keen intellect of Sir Garnet were breaking the back of the great African fighting-machine, and Cetewayo, sullen and snarling, was creeping northward unvanquished but losing.

Desmond was in the fighting after this, in it every day, — sometimes a picket skirmish, sometimes the defence of a wagon train. Once he rode over fifty miles of country alone, with the Queen's messages.

Then they drew in slowly and surely on the King's kraal.

Desmond's squadron was with the advance,

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— a strong advance, so strong as to be almost un-English.

The home papers said that whilst one Englishman was without doubt as good as a hundred Zulus, it had been found a very excellent plan to use five or even ten where one was really sufficient.

So at last Cetewayo's impi, forced together into one great black army, strong, well disciplined, and brave, had clustered in a dense mass over the miles of open plain which surrounded the King's kraal at Ulundi.

When the small boys of the great Republic over sea were lighting their early fire-crackers on the Fourth of July, 1879, the sun was rising on the greatest battlefield of the Zulu war.

As the daylight grew, Desmond sat his horse in the rear, in the very hollow of the plain two miles from the foothills. He saw far to the east and far to the west and before him a great line of men stretched out in the good old British formation which won Water-

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loo, fought the Crimea, and will fight many another war, — the hollow square.

Away off to the right, forming the extreme outer edge in that direction, lay the second battalion of the Cameronians, — the “bloomin’ graybacks,” as the trooper next Desmond called them.

Next them, forming the forward angle, lay almost a whole battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment, and at this angle, strongly supported, were three rocket troughs, manned by Battery P of the Royal Artillery, and two Gardner guns of the Cape corps.

Out from the point where the sunrise would be in a moment, before one could see them at all, one could hear the shrilling of the pipes of the Royal Scotch Fusileers, where they lay supporting the other angle, and a battery of mountain guns.

As the sun topped the hills, out of the mist, away off to the northward there arose a swelling murmur, rhythmic, low, and distant, creeping in, growing louder and nearer, swelling all along the line from east to west,

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until the fidget of the troop horses, who hate it, would have told the men, had they not known, that the waves of the impis were coming.

Then from the angle to the eastward, with a loud swish and a mighty trail of fire and sparks, a great war rocket, the "Fire Devil" of the Zulus, rose in a long graceful curve, struck the ground half a mile to the northward, and burst in the very heart of the advancing lines with a mighty crash of scattering gravel and shrapnel. Then another, and another, and another, until the air was full of "Fire Devils," great red fiery snakes travelling in long curves like meteors, bursting with a crash and a clatter like the shaking of giant keys.

Then from the westward angle in sharp rhythmic succession the field guns opened in fan formation, firing first shrapnel, and then, as the black line still drew in unfaltering, changing to canister, and mowing great swaths that closed up almost like water.

Yet a little nearer they came, chanting un-

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brokenly along the whole great two-mile line the one, strong, mighty war-song of Cete-wayo's impis.

Suddenly the world began to boil. No other word can describe it. The great square was framed in fire. One could not distinguish reports at all. They came in volleys only at first, and from the two angles the cross-fire of the machine guns sputtered unceasingly as the cranks were turned gayly round.

Desmond shook himself, and shifted uneasily in his saddle. "What manner of fighting was this," he thought, "for a Queen's Dragoon?" Away off in the heart of the square, back from the front, where he could not see the face of the enemy. Nothing to do but to sit still and watch, and let the other fellows have the fun. He fidgeted, and his horse catching the spirit fidgeted too, until at last Major Marter himself rode up to Desmond's troop, and told the boys to be quiet, they should have their share presently.

Still the square sides spat fire. Still the

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"Fire Devils" rose from the angles in ever-shortening curves.

Now and then the fire would die down, as man after man would cease firing and set his sights lower. At such times the chanting would rise louder, fiercer, and stronger, and Desmond wondered how many blacks there could be in the world, and if this could go on forever.

Then at last there came a time, as the day wore on, when the Zulus deserted their last line of cover, and with one grand impetuous rush swept in upon the square, until for a brief instant more than one man thought that Ulundi would be the "Place of Death" over again. For that short while every man on the square front fired unceasingly.

The smoke rose a little from the line, and settled down again in a hot, seething, heavy atmosphere, and shut out black from white and white from black, until all up and down the line the bugles sounded to cease firing.

Desmond came to with a jerk, as one does at sea when the engine stops; and lo,

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there was no chant of impis and the world was still.

Cetewayo's great fighting-machine was broken, and there at the point of the high tide, where the waves had swept up within sixty yards of the square, all along like a wall lay the dead, piled up in heaps and masses, where the British Martinis had stopped them.

The smoke lifted, and over towards the hills one might see scattered black masses retreating rapidly, unformed, disorganized, totally unlike the mighty impis of the day before.

It was Desmond's turn now. The day of the cavalry had come. Merrily the mellow cavalry bugles sent forth the advance. With ringing cheers the square front broke open a wide door to let them out, and the Dragoon Guards and the Seventeenth Lancers, with a lot of irregular Cape Cavalry, pushed out at a canter after the fleeing enemy.

Rapidly the cavalry command broke up into small detachments, riding hard all over

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the plain for miles and miles, catching and cutting down, lifting at lance points, tramping, riding over all that they could catch.

When the night came two troops of the Dragoons were alone, and bivouacked with their saddles for pillows and the light of the moon for a tent roof.

Then on, breaking up again into yet smaller detachments, until the command in which Desmond rode was little more than a troop, with Major Marter heading it.

They were sweeping through the brush now, pushing on to a point which Marter alone seemed to know, but towards which the men, keen for more fighting, followed him eagerly.

Two miles of hard riding through thorny brush and wait-a-bit brought them all unexpectedly at last into a cultivated clearing.

Almost before Desmond saw the great beehive-shaped hut in its centre, almost before he realized that they seemed to be facing impis again, the bugles rang loud with the charge, and the horses' heads were down,

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and the sabres were out, and they were among them.

It was a brief, sharp fight, and in the midst of it Desmond's horse went down with an assagai a foot deep in his chest, and Desmond went over his head.

When he picked himself up, he saw four or five other men dismounted like himself, running with the clumsy stride of the cavalryman towards the great beehive hut, into which black forms were dodging; and towards it Desmond ran too.

Being fresh from school, he ran better than the others. Straight through the little door he sped; and well it was he came, for in the semi-darkness a British officer was down, and half a dozen black fellows, each impeded by the others, were trying to get at him.

Over in the far corner, shouting orders shrilly and fast, half crouching, half sitting, was a black mountain of flesh that Desmond knew somehow was the arch-fiend of them all, — the great Cetewayo.



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The Desmond blood was up. The Zulu heart was cowed. The very spring that sent him among the group that stood over his officer, set the Zulus to running. Two went down. Major Marter came to his feet.

There was a rush, a struggle in the corner, and Desmond, panting, hot, tired, but full of joy, lay on top of the great Zulu chief — on top of him — and scragged him with a good English scrag and put his knee into his chest and held him there.

Cetewayo, the mighty Cetewayo, King of all the Zulus, was captured by Desmond of Dulwich.

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A little boy asked three times for tarts, and held out his penny; but Jones, the buttery man, who valued pennies next most highly to the good repute of "God's gift to Dulwich," heeded him not, but read on and on, over and over, in the page of the "Gazette" these few brief words, words destined never to be forgotten in the college of the "Blue and the Black": —

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“By order of Her Majesty the Queen, Lance Corporal Desmond, Troop M, Second Battalion, First Dragoon Guards, was, under date of August 28th, gazetted to be Second Lieutenant of the same Troop and Battalion, for distinguished gallantry and courage in action, he having captured unassisted Cetewayo, King of the Zulus.”

AT THE ZARIBA



AT THE ZARIBA

"To him that hath shall be given"

HE stood five feet ten, and he wore khaki and a pith helmet. "Look here, Tom!" he said, "don't be a duffer! There's no hurry! Wait until the elephants come up!"

Tom was impatient. He was fresh out. He never had tasted jungle fever. To him the dense thickets of pea-green bamboo and the heavy thorn-clad vines of the jungle meant concentrated joy.

Furthermore, Tom was hasty of temper. He had the real red hair of Lanark, and even, it was alleged, toed in when he walked, like a pitman, and now, lured forward on the one hand by the wavy whispering bambôo jungle and the knowledge of the hard-hit tiger within it, and pushed on the other hand by his over-

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plus of north-country temper, he insisted upon going into that particular bit of jungle, despite the many urgent requests which came from his senior.

Tom scowled angrily as he replied: "I propose to go where I please. You are n't obliged to come. You can stay out here with the beaters, if you like."

Jenkins of the khaki and pith helmet, he of the back-door entrance to the army, smiled down quizzically on Tom, and said with much good-will, "Why, young 'un, what an awful fool you are!"

But Tom did n't see the joke. He shrugged his shoulders, called to his shikari, and plunged straight into the dense mass of green ahead of him.

Then it was that Jenkins himself frowned and rose reluctantly from the little stalking-stool upon which he had been sitting. He reached out his hand to the bearer who carried his own double paradox, bent forward and tightened his putties, and plunged almost at a double into the jungle, which had already

closed behind the retreating form of his subaltern.

The bamboo jungles of the northern bottom-lands of the Madras Presidency teem twelve months in the year with insect life. At every step little green, and blue, and yellow beetles run in and out and over the vegetation in all directions, while myriads of flies, little and big, buzz about in persistent throngs.

Only the game paths, twisting aimlessly in and out and up and down, give access to animals as large as man, and even on the game paths the going is none of the best.

Along one of these paths Tom was pressing, eager to bag his first tiger, — so eager that he was doing that foolish thing which is seldom attempted save by newcomers or by officers of the Bheels, with whom it is a traditional obligation, — following a wounded tiger on foot.

Close behind Tom, quite grim and sober now, stalked his senior; and though Tom knew well that Jenkins was there, he would fain have had Jenkins believe that he knew it not at

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all, and would have considered it of infinitely small importance if he had.

The shikaris, wise and pious Hindoos both, had seen fit, as more than one good shikari has seen before, to think it the will of their lords and masters that they should linger far behind.

Thus it happened that Jenkins and Elphinstone of the Fourteenth Ghoorkas entered alone together into the jungle.

Few animals are more completely courageous, more absolutely without fear, than a scratched tiger, unless it be his jungle mate, the buffalo.

Tom's tiger was no exception. Besides having courage, he was big, well fed, and powerful, and he even enjoyed the hunt a little himself. Was not he the king of this particular jungle? Had not he himself, with his own broad paw, smitten down the great hairless water buffalo, which had held that jungle for so long a time?

This jungle path held unusually straight. The general trend was down hill, and the

twilight grew dimmer and yet more dim, as the bamboos down in the damper ground grew taller and more rank and their leaves heavier.

Tom Elphinstone walked easily with an assumption of nonchalance. He had made sufficient concession to fate to bring his double express to the full cock, but he disdained to carry it at the ready, and swung along as if he was following a setter among the turnips.

He was therefore a strange contrast to Jenkins, who walked as one treading on uncertain snow-crust, and kept his eye fixed on the farthest visible point of the path, and who held his double-barrelled paradox not only cocked but in that position so characteristic of the Indian sportsman, trigger up, hammer down, over the right shoulder, ready to swing forward at an instant's notice of requirement.

The path swung off sharp to the right a little beyond them, as they came down to the bottom of the hollow. Jenkins, annoyed as he was with his junior, tapped him gently on the shoulder with one finger, and said, "We

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shall find him around that point, and he will be coming ten feet at a jump."

To which kindly warning Elphinstone gave recognition only by a contemptuous sniff.

It all came in an instant at last. A bounding bunch of yellow and black in the half light, coming down the path on three legs like a ricocheting cannon-ball ; the double spat of an ill-aimed express, cutting off many a bamboo leaf but doing no worse damage ; and then for one-half second a most confused and remarkable mass of mingled man, tiger, and gun.

The single report of the paradox came like a period at the end of a short emphatic sentence.

Jenkins seated himself, with that slow indolence which comes of a characteristic Indian liver, upon the tiger's head and proceeded to fill his pipe as if the game had been one of Elphinstone's partridges, after all.

The pipe being filled to his satisfaction, and Elphinstone having picked himself out of the mud and green slimy water into which he

had rolled in his efforts to get from under, Jenkins cocked one smiling blue eye up at him through the birdseye smoke, and said, "Young 'un, you're the beastliest little ass that I ever saw trusted with an express."

Tom Elphinstone was a good sort, after all, for he walked up to the man whom he had never known until that moment, held out his hand, and said: "I believe I was a regular cad. I am sorry and ashamed of myself, but I will tell you one thing, old man, I am jolly glad I serve under you."

This sentence was scarcely concluded, when a meek but insinuating voice suggested in Hindostanee at Jenkins' elbow: "If the sahib had fired at the time when his slave suggested, using care to point his honorable rifle at the point which his slave had so often impressed upon him as the proper point —" Much more was to follow, but Jenkins removed his pipe from his mouth for a sufficiently long period to say "Shut up!" Which the shikari did with all promptitude.

The tiger was skinned deftly in the most

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approved manner, and two respectful Ghoorkas, who held the local shikaris in wholesome loathing, held a blanket around the head of the objecting pony, whilst the hide was lashed on him. Then the long journey which followed the successful four days' shoot was begun by the Ghoorkas on foot, and the officer sahibs on their ponies.

There was a four hours' morning march, a halt in the heat of the day, and a night spent in a not too inviting dak-bungalow. And when the next day's sun soared perilously high, the little party, climbing now, swung around the spur of the foothill range into full view of the cantonment.

Now Jenkins, as may have already been observed, was a man of few and short words; but as his eye caught the stir so rare in a Madras cantonment at the noon hour, there came into his voice a touch of enthusiasm, as he said: "By Jove, something's up! Another row with the hill tribes, I'll wager, and the rainy season coming on. You're in for your first jungle fever this time, young 'un."

The weary ponies were pushed into a protesting trot, and clattered up into the cantonment yard just in time to hear the red-faced and perspiring Colonel saying most insistent and improper things to a mount, which was circling away from him more rapidly than the old gentleman could pursue his stirrup.

The parade ground was full of little men in green, with flat faces and sparkling eyes, and pill-box caps all cocked over to the left, who, ranged up with the precision of European troops, looked on without a grin or a snicker, as the Colonel, a little late for parade, gave what the adjutant called his daily "waltz exhibition."

Jenkins and Elphinstone tumbled off their shooting ponies anyhow, and tossed the reins to their servants. Then at a double they ran across the shady corner of the parade-ground to their quarters, burst their respective doors open with truly British kicks, and flung themselves within their rooms and out of their khaki clothing almost at the same instant.

It is true their leave was not up until tomorrow. They might quite as well have

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gone to the Officers' Club, and ordered a "B. and S.," but Elphinstone was new to the service and enthusiastic, and Jenkins was a back-door officer, who had won his Indian commission by sheer care and attention to duty.

The Colonel therefore had scarce found his seat, which, to his credit be it said, he held with more grace than his weight would have seemed to indicate as possible, when the two late comers dashed forth from their quarters again, neatly and properly clad in uncompromising green. Almost before the adjutant had turned over the command, they were in their proper places with their company, to the vast relief of their captain, who had scarcely fancied the task of handling his eighty-odd men single-handed.

Lest too much credit should be meted out to either enthusiasm as personified by Elphinstone, or to discipline in the lank and angular person of Jenkins, it should be said that at this particular hill station regimental parades were never held in the heat of the day, and it was for this reason that the two men of the

tiger were so anxious to get to the right of their files.

The Colonel sat on his horse before the regiment and studied his men critically for what seemed an interminable time, while the sun beat down upon them in a way which they were soon to think mild by comparison, but which now seemed unbearable. Then the Colonel talked with the Senior Major, who, in response to a signal, had put his horse close up to the Colonel's.

By and by there were a few perfunctory orders and movements, and then that befell which had not befallen for a year and more.

The Colonel swung himself heavily to the ground, walked up to the first company, and began a personal inspection of arms, uniforms, and equipments, accompanying his inspection of each man with a string of criticisms seldom of a complimentary nature.

At the Officers' Club that night they were full of it.

The Colonel made a ponderous little speech, in which he said many things which had been

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said repeatedly before, reminding his "young gentlemen" that they must remember that England placed her trust in them, that they were about to fight for the glory and honor of the British flag, that the eye of Europe was upon this particular regiment of Ghoorikas, that he did n't doubt that his officers would be foremost on all occasions, and so on, with many platitudes of the same kind, which scarce need repeating, for they may be heard any day when a British regiment goes out to foreign service.

Elphinstone in a remote corner of the room, almost crowded out indeed on to the wide veranda, listened with wide-eyed enthusiasm, and felt himself stirred to the very core with tingling patriotism.

Jenkins, smoking as persistently as ever, remained completely stolid, placing himself on record only once, when he murmured in a grumbling manner to his neighbor, "Beastly place the Soudan, worse than four months at Perim, I'm thinking!"

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The engines which haul the heavy trains of the Bombay and Trans-India railway were most of them manufactured in the United States. This accounts for the dignity and manliness, so to speak, of their whistles; at least, this is the explanation which is commonly offered by the occasional commercial visitor from Philadelphia. At any rate, the whistles of the Bombay and Trans-India railroad toot deep and loud, in marked and pleasing contrast to the shrill pipes of their British brethren, which haul the lighter trains of the spur lines.

The whistle of the engine which hauled the first three companies of the Fourteenth Ghoorkas blew loud, hoarse, and long, as the train whirled and rumbled into Bombay, and the fat coal from the Welsh mines sent great clouds of glowing cinders whirling high up into the starlit night as the great locomotive slowed down to six miles an hour, for the final run in through the outskirts of the city.

On the platform at Bombay, a tall gray-

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haired officer of the Indian staff corps walked impatiently up and down, looking nervously every moment at his watch, until away up the line in the darkness he caught the whirl, the flare, and the ripple of that fountain of sparks drawing in so fast on the city.

The air-brakes had scarce stopped squealing, and the few short convulsive jerks of stopping were hardly over, ere the little hill men in green had tumbled out of the carriages, and were forming up with the precision of clock work on the platform.

The Senior Major saluted with all formality as the Honorable Colonel approached him, and the two men exchanged a few hasty sentences.

The long night on the train had left the Ghoorkas soiled and weary. As they stood formed on the platform, the daylight came into the sky with all the haste of the tropics, and through the gray mist of the morning they marched off, not for a rest at one of the cantonments, nor for a bivouac of a few hours on the great parade ground, but straight down to the harbor front.

So without a pause or a murmur, they tumbled into the barges, the lighters, and the shore craft which were waiting for them, and to the tune of the glorious cheering which the blue jackets know so well how to give, went bobbing away out over the yellow-colored water of Bombay harbor to where the great transports lay, rising and falling on the ground swell, waiting for their human cargo.

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Jenkins and Elphinstone were clad in khaki again, and once more their heads rejoiced in a pith covering. They leaned limp in the terrific heat upon the scorching rail, and watched with interested eyes the low sandy coast-line of Africa, washed by the vaporous waters of the Red Sea, where lies reflected, more red and more forbidding than the original, the burnished copper hue of the African desert sky.

There were three transports all closely bunched together, and they carried the whole field force of the fighting Fourteenth Ghoorkas.

The transport which bore our two men of

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the tiger, and the best of their battalion, led the line.

Her great screw slowed down to twenty beats a minute as the sandy African coast crept out towards her, and she pointed her nose full for the southward sixty-mile channel.

Slowly northward and westward she crept, followed by her consorts, along the steadily narrowing path, shut in on either side by the furnace of the hot red sand. The mercury under the awning crept steadily up to one hundred and ten, and stopped hesitatingly.

Elphinstone's Lanark blood asserted itself again, and he swore he would resign and be hanged to the service. Jenkins, his senior, laughed at him in the most good-humored way in the world.

Slowly in through the channel they crawled, across the narrow piece of open water to the southward of the inner harbor, and slowly, with the screw beating ten to the minute, right up to the iron engineer corps pier of Quarantine Island, and disembarkment began.

Suakin is a miserable hole. Most of the people are the scum of the earth. Unregenerate Arabs ; oil-smeared Soudanese ; chattering, rice-eating Chinamen ; perspiring and patient Italians, and Hebrews intent on the gathering of money ; Egyptians with sphinx-like faces ; and white-clad donkey boys.

All of these and many others combined into one motley party-colored crew to make as strange and as malodorous a crowd as ever gathered around a landing-pier.

The transport which had brought Elphinstone's company swung off into the stream to make room for the one behind her.

Even as the Fourteenth Ghorkas filed down the gang plank onto Quarantine Island, and formed out in the crowded mass with scarce room to swing about in, her Majesty's gunboat "Thetis," moored close up to the western shore of the harbor, opened suddenly with her main battery. Shell after shell went singing and shrieking out into the desert, to throw up great fountains and columns of sand, where the mirage met the

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nearer desert, and where little bunches of the enemy were skirmishing about on some unknown errand.

The Fourteenth Ghoorkas landed, and formed up on Quarantine Island complete from colonel to flat-faced buglers and low-caste water-carriers.

The little men from India, clad now in khaki like their English brethren, laughing, chattering like so many sun-bred monkeys, appeared to rejoice and be happy in the very heat of the day, full of thoughts of good fighting before them.

Once more the Colonel went through his usual waltz with his mount. The majors climbed into their saddles. The company officers straightened the lines of their men, and reverberating above everything the great guns of her Majesty's gunboat "Thetis" boomed on at dignified intervals, making fountain after fountain of sand four miles away, out on the desert.

Ten minutes through grimy Suakin, and then ankle deep into the desert sand they

went. Before them and a little to the right Fort Foulah, low and menacing, confident in her strength of Gardner guns and never-failing wells, cast a short black shadow. Onward they trudged, past the camp of the Bengal cavalry, straight to the right of the Indian brigade, to camping-grounds which had long since been assigned.

Silently and swiftly the great square wall tents were set, and long ere the distant chanting of the night patrols began all were under canvas.

Elphinstone the discontented, and Jenkins his senior, felt at home once more ; but rest at Suakin there was none. All the long bright day, so merciless in its heat, an endless procession of groaning camels swayed slowly onward to the camps to the north and the west, bearing the tins of bitter, insipid water, which all must have or die. Full lucky that officer who, by long and secret toil and much petitioning, could secure for himself and his tent-mates enough of the wretched bitter fluid for one little dip

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now and again. The Colonel, who in the days when his lips were smooth had been at the Redan, swore by many curious Indian saints that it was the Crimean summer over again, and that one must choose between tea and a bath.

"It would be rather a lark," said Elphinstone, "if only it was n't so hot and if the commissary had remembered to send out a little mustard to help down the bouilli beef."

But Jenkins made no comments. He had little time to make them. All through the short black night the sentries on the outposts would break into the rhythmic chant of "All's Well," dying away into a wordless murmur to the south, where the water batteries lay. Sometimes it would be followed by the sharp crack of a rifle and the spatter of a night attack, and then it was always Jenkins, Lieutenant Jenkins, who led the relief or the reconnoissance. If a water convoy, starting from Quarantine Island after ten hours of inglorious toil, must make its slow groaning way out on the desert towards

Hasheen, who should command it but Jenkins? "Poor old Jenkins" the chaps got to calling him.

There came a night at last when Elphinstone and Jenkins lay down together in their "European private" tent for what Jenkins was pleased to call a "good old night" of sleep. But just as midnight had turned, there came without warning the bark of a Gardner gun from the water batteries at the south, the crash of an outpost volley at the north, the rush of feet and a spatter of incoming shots. Then, before Elphinstone could raise himself, the wall of the tent by his side was split open with a sudden slash, and a foot and a half of Bagara sword stood for an instant gray and menacing in the opening.

On his feet in an instant, clad in boots and little else, Jenkins dashed out through the opening the sword had made, and his revolver barked loud and sharp in the very heart of the Indian brigade, and then, as the firing died away at the north, Jenkins came in through the door of the tent and rolled him-

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self slowly and snugly into his corner, and went peacefully to sleep without a word.

When Elphinstone awoke in the morning, the first sound that caught his ear was the voice of the English drill-sergeant from Devon, in drawling and slow but interested accents, saying: "Funny little Fuzzy Wuzzy, ain't he? Look at the sword he has got to him! Just fancy that little beggar getting in all the way through the outposts." And it was n't till then that Elphinstone realized what Jenkins had done.

The weeks wore on and the Ghoorkas had not moved. In the mean time the Guards had come. "Her Majesty's carpet soldiers," Jenkins called them. The Lancers and Hus-sars had been out, there had been a struggle towards the black hills at the westward, and the Ghoorkas fretted and fumed; whilst the Colonel, fractious and quarrelsome, had learned at least three new phrases of discontent.

Early one afternoon — it was the twenty-first day of March — Jenkins had acquired a

properly warmed bottle of St. Julien, and Elphinstone having squandered a week's pay on a box of sardines at Ross's, the company mess was entertaining a Major of the Guards, when suddenly a staff officer from headquarters, "especially detailed," so he said to McNeal, galloped up to the Colonel's tent and the Ghoorkas knew that they were to move.

And the next morning four thousand men, laughing and happy, or as happy as men can be with a long hot day before them, moved out towards the south and towards Samai.

The Guards and the Forty-ninth crawled out into the desert in a marching square, at a slow two miles an hour. Behind them, with an endless stream of water camels trailing far into the distance, came practically the whole of the Indian brigade. In the rear the marines and the sailors dragged the Gardners by long rope trailers, the wheels rutting deep into the brown squealing sand, and holding back at every step.

The Ghoorkas were there, and Jenkins and Elphinstone with them, — Jenkins solemn and

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happy ; Elphinstone grumbling and savage, but with the joy of a boy in his heart.

Six or eight miles out into the desert they went, with cavalry scattered in reconnoissance in advance and on either flank, across a hollow and on to the brow of a little sand-hill rising beyond, and then "Halt !"

Swiftly the engineer officer of McNeal's staff traced out on the brown sand, which was burning now, a triple diamond ; a large one for the Indian brigade, a small one to the west, where the Forty-ninth and the Guards were to be, and another yet smaller to the eastward for the marines.

Then, as the men broke ranks, and the groaning camels struggled slowly in from the southward, long and gay came mess call that meant welcome food and rest. The bouilli beef cans were opened and the rancid waterskins were tapped, and the men had a rest for an hour.

Then the order came to cut brush, and in a moment rifles were laid down, sword bayonets were out, and the prickly desert mimosa was

falling in all directions to make "the best zariba that ever was," so said Elphinstone.

At the outer angles of the smaller diamond the sailors, slower and more taciturn, were filling great white bags marked "Pillsbury's Best," with the glowing brown sand of the desert, and heaping them into a redoubt around the Gardner guns.

Still the camels came groaning and moaning and grumbling, an endless stream from the southward, swinging around the western end of the growing zariba and halting in a dense mass between the men and the hills; whilst out on the plain, in every direction, the Fifth Lancers ambled as best their horses could, up and down, watching for the enemy.

The Gardner guns were almost entrenched; the ammunition chests came up and were breached.

Elphinstone, amongst the camels, the toiling men, and the heat, turned to Jenkins and grumbled: "Rum place for a halt, this. I wonder what the old man is thinking about, anyhow!"

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"Best go tell the General you don't like it," said Jenkins, and urged on his Ghorkas to their bramble slashing.

Then a trooper came galloping in with sand spurting up in little fountains from his horses' hoofs, and without saluting, without dismounting — for all of which he might have been courtmartialled at home — said he had seen an Arab in the brush.

Then from far to the east came another trooper, rising and falling in his saddle, showing high in the brambles, until he disappeared and his horse came in and told the story.

Then from all sides came riderless horses, and sometimes a horse and his rider, and the camels screamed. The men, poor fellows, were scattered over a thousand acres, and their rifles were on the ground.

Before a single Martini could be snatched from the hot sand, blistering the hands of the man that grasped it, a single white-clad figure burst from the bush carrying a great green banner covered with mystic Arabic

motatoes, and rushed at the fresh redoubt of the Gardners. As he passed a group of Ghoorkas, it was Jenkins' revolver that spoke first and stopped the man and the banner.

Then there was chaos. The scrambling of hurrying men, the loud shrill cries of the camels, a sea of tossing white tunics and broad-bladed spears, and a spatter of Remington rifle shots, and many a noble fellow fell with his rifle fifty feet away and a bunch of briars for weapon.

Then the Gardners opened — too late; and the Forty-ninth, rallying by squads to the cry of "Stand to your arms!" held off the rushing tide for a second. The Ghoorkas, running like agile monkeys, made for the central square with their unfamiliar Martinis in their grasp, and longing for the Sniders they had left behind.

The camels, a thousand more or less, were stampeded by the firing and mingled inextricably with the throng of Fuzzy Wuzzys charging down on the central zariba. The swords of the tribesmen struck right and left,

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and hundreds of hamstrung animals fell struggling and helpless.

The Nineteenth Native Infantry, which stood on guard, opened at will — alas, unguided — into the struggling mass, and the cavalry far out on the plain, cut off from retreat and from succor, struggled and fought, lay behind their horses and fought on, and died almost to a man.

Jenkins and Elphinstone, in avoiding the rush of the camels, were separated from most of their men, and with not more than a dozen of their little Ghoorkas, rallied by fours as best they could on the desert, but before they had fairly formed, a last wild volley from the disorganized Sepoys of the Nineteenth killed their men even as they rallied, and then the Bagara storm swept on to them and rolled them over and over in the sand.

The Gardner guns were silent now, but the rifle shots came rhythmic and smooth with the sound of steady volleying. The square had formed at last. And then it was that the last Ghoorka fell, in a death grapple

with a white-robed figure, and the Arab rolling slowly over on his back, the last one left about them, called piteously for water.

Now Elphinstone had not studied Arabic for nothing, and he was a merciful chap and fresh from home. He sprang to the fallen figure, even as Jenkins grasped him by the shoulder, and cried out to him not to be foolish, but his flask was out, his heart was warm, and shaking off Jenkins' kindly hand, Elphinstone knelt down beside the black man. The blow of the spear in the dying hand came quick, and Elphinstone, sore wounded, lay beside him, leaving only Jenkins standing.

The bugles rang loud the rally, as the second burst of the white tide rolled up from the bush beyond them, and Elphinstone writhed feebly from side to side, and the Arab died.

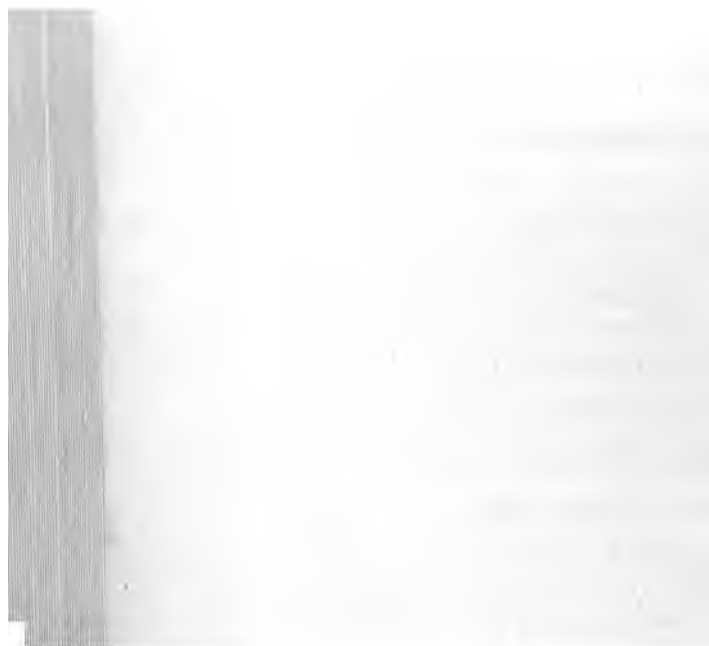
The white tide swept nearer, and Jenkins stood astride the wounded body of his comrade, while Elphinstone's hoarse voice begged him to go while yet he could, and get to his

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men and his duty. And then they came, and Jenkins' revolver grew hot and his lips turned white, and set hard in a square firm line. His sword broke short at the hilt. He fought with his hands, his feet, and his teeth, and the tide rolled on and over them. The sun beat down and the air quivered where the Fourteenth Ghoorkas had rallied and where now no one stood.

Elphinstone opened his eyes to consciousness at last. A little grinning Ghoorka, who had found him, said, as comfortingly as he could in his broken English, that Elphinstone Sahib would surely have the Victoria Cross for standing by his comrade, even though poor Jenkins Sahib was not saved after all.

JUDGE NOT!



JUDGE NOT!

OLD Eton's walls loomed gray and soft through the smoky haze of a late June afternoon. Across the lush green meadows of the river-side the towers of Windsor stood high and bold, and the royal ensign fluttered stiff and straight in the afternoon breeze.

The ripple of the weir water from below fell soft and tinkling on the ear, in full harmony with the singing of a bunch of Eton boys, who were pulling lustily up stream in a six-oar.

Ahead of them, in midstream, swaying slowly, between her setting-poles, a fishing-punt lay moored half-way between the meadows of Buckingham and the tow-path of the Berkshire shore.

The song ceased as the Eton boat swept around the bend towards the punt and the

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six-oar spurred under the voice of the coxswain, for it was timber for the next year's Henley that was practising there.

The punt lay full in the centre of a narrow reach, where the water leaps down swift and deep between the two old Saxon kingdoms. Just above the punt a sharp bend led off under the willows towards the quiet reaches below Boveney.

Around the willow-clad bend, just as the Eton boat got its nose beside the punt, staggered a randan. No other word can describe the gait of a boat propelled by three oars, with each man working absolutely according to his own best idea.

A half-dozen or more of drunken soldiers are no uncommon sight at Hampton or Richmond, but a randan full at Windsor is another tale ; and the coxswain of the Eton gig cried aloud to them in mingled anger and surprise, as he pulled hard on the tiller rope. The amiable tradesman in the punt, whose paternostering after barbel had not been in vain, shouted loud and vigorous words of warning and advice.

The soldiers in the randan, too happy for dull care to find a rest amidst them, burst loudly into song and rowed mightily all on one side together.

The Eton boat, shooting forward too fast to be quickly checked, cut a smooth arc toward the Windsor shore; but the randan changing its course at the same moment got in the way, and the next instant the punt was tossing wildly in the mimic storm caused by the overturned randan, a half-dozen splashing soldiers, and the pitching Eton gig.

Five of the suddenly sobered soldiers struck out instantly for the "Bucks" shore, but the sixth, flinging his hands wildly into the air, shrieked for help once in a choking voice and disappeared. The next moment, far below the punt the swift current surged up for an instant red with the crimson coat of the man it was whirling over and over.

The stroke of the Eton gig stood up in his place and measured the swift smooth-running water with his eye, mentally calculating in a single mind-flash the distance to the weir be-

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low ; then, with a shout of " Put her about, Hopkins ! Follow me down, you fellows ! " plunged smoothly and softly as a water-rat, leaving scarcely a ripple.

The three oars on the Buckingham side of the gig dipped together, as the coxswain held the rudder hard over and the boat came swiftly about.

The Thames at Windsor runs swift and strong, and above the weir the current sets in with a swirl towards the Berkshire shore through a tangle of weeds and eel grass.

The flaxen head of the Eton boy raised itself once high out of the water, and then turning swiftly on his side with his left arm sweeping clear of the water with every stroke, the boy shot swiftly down and across to the deeper water towards the south in pursuit of the drowning soldier, and the gig crew bent their backs to chase him.

Down below the bend, where the river widens out and the eel grass comes close to the top, the boy caught the red-clad figure as it rolled slowly on its face and started to

settle for the third time. The dying soldier's fingers set with a vise-like grip around the slender throat of the lad, and the water was churned for an instant into white foam, and then both settled together.

Twice they rose, struggling and thrashing, and then — perhaps because the soldier was almost dead — the lad freed himself and grasped the man beneath both arms ; and so, slowly and with laboring breath, drew him, with a skill long since acquired in the swimming-tank, up into shallow water, and fell unconscious beside him, whilst a dozen willing folk from the tow-path rushed in and dragged them ashore.

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The fifth form room at Eton, with its black oak benches carved deep with many a name full dear to history, buzzed like a throng of new-hived bees.

The tall form of the Head Master in his long black robe and crimson hood strode down through the central aisle and up to the master's desk, and a hush of pent-up pride settled deep on two hundred boys.

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The Head Master stood behind the desk, — an older boy among the boys he loved. He cast his eyes up and down the rows, and cleared his voice.

“Young gentlemen,” he said, “it has been the privilege of Eton to rear many a noble fellow. The pages of the world’s history are eloquent with the names of Eton boys. The waters of Father Thames have floated the boats and bathed the limbs of a dozen generations of Eton boys, who have carried the old school’s name into the far corners of the earth and taught the world the worth of English gentlemen. Courage, honor, self-sacrifice, and strength, but above all courage and honor, we breathe with the very air about our gray towers. I have come to the fifth form room to-day on an errand the parallel of which every Head Master of Eton has known before, to do honor to a boy who I truly believe does but share with you the courage which is our heritage, but who has shown it well.”

The Head Master paused, and the hum rose in a crescendo to the oaken rafters.

“Braxton Primus,” said the Head Master ; and a flaxen-haired lad, lithe, slender, and handsome, rose and stood.

“Braxton Primus, it is my honor and my privilege to be chosen by the Royal Humane Society to present to you in their name the medal of the Society, for having saved the life of a fellow being at imminent peril to your own. This medal I now give you, and I can only say, my lad, — nay, what more can I say than that you are Eton’s son ? ”

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A white-haired man, with but a single arm, paced restlessly back and forth across the tiger rug in front of the sea-coal fire, raising his eyes impatiently now and then towards the closed door of the library.

His eyes brightened as the door swung open and his son came in with a light and buoyant step.

“Well ? ” said the father ; and then he paused, half proud, half fearing for the answer.

The youngster held out his hand without a word. “The post has come, governor,” he

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said, "and it is good-by to old England for a bit. The orders are to join at Gibraltar. The P. and O. boat sails next Wednesday; and by Jove, half the Sandhurst men of my year are either under orders or out there already. Four more days with you and the dear Mater, and then it's good-by for a bit, sir."

For an instant a cloud swept across the old man's face, and then he smiled.

"Tush, it won't last until you get there, lad! I know Chelmsford well. I was brigaded with him in North India. Why, lad, those black fellows won't last two weeks under Chelmsford's pounding."

The care and anxiety of the moment left the old man's voice, and he plunged deep into a long tale of the Mutiny.

The last afternoon had come. The dog-cart was at the door of Braxton Hall. The one-armed father and the white-haired mother stood on the steps, with a little group of servants behind them, and Cedric Braxton grasped his father's hand long and hard.



The father looked the boy straight in the eye and laughed a little softly.

"Cedric," he said, "be off, lad, be off! We old folks will watch you with our eyelids closed. Remember that we have been soldiers for five hundred years, and never forget the motto of our house: 'Courage, Country, and Honor;' that's our heritage. And now be off with you."

The servants broke into loud lamentations, as Yorkshire servants sometimes will when the young master is off to the wars. The gravel crunched under the wheels of the dog-cart. The cob's hoofs clattered and twinkled around the bend, and the son of Braxton Manor was gone.

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Isandlwana had been fought. The dust-choked men at Rourke's Drift had made a brave struggle, and full many white helmets lay unused on many scattered fields beside the men who had worn them.

Fresh troops from Gibraltar, Malta, and the home stations, proud in the fresh courage

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which they had brought from cooler climes, had joined Chelmsford, and with them came the man who took over the command.

The Zulus would not stand for a battle, but in the deep-river bottoms many a man was stabbed in the back as he staggered down thirstily to the water. In the open plains many small patrols or parties on reconnoissance were cut off and had to fight or run for their lives, full lucky if half of the men won back to camp. Often in the succeeding months the double outposts of some detached force gave warning in the nick of time for the troops to rise and rally and stand off with flashing Martinis the terrors of a night attack.

The discipline was magnificent ; not a man failed in his duty, nor faltered in the charge.

The closing in had begun, and a regular line of bayonets and sabres, close on to a hundred miles long, was winning forward into the dry lands, without a loss of communication by night or day between the sections, or a chance — most fatal had it

come — of Cetewayo or one of his indunas with an impi breaking through.

Cedric Braxton had done his part. "Fine chap, but mighty unlucky," the other fellows said of him ; for not one fight had he seen in the long hot four months of his service, but only distant firing and now and again a lozenge-shaped shield bobbing up and down in the grass, and the dead who could not run away from him.

Braxton was sturdy and well, but the father would not have known his son for all that. He would not have known the restless eye, the jerky movements, and the troubled hectored look which Cedric always carried now.

"Have you noticed young Braxton?" said his Captain to the Senior Major. "The youngster looks worried and miserable. He is fretting his heart out over something."

The Senior Major nodded sagely, pulled out his pipe, and grunted assent. "Fretting his heart out. That's just it, by Jove! Trembling to be in the running like a fretful

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hunter. I know the breed. I served under his father in India. Give him a fight or two and he'll be as right as a top."

An African tempest with its shrieking wind, its driving sheets of rain slanting down almost parallel with the earth, is a fearsome thing at night. The blackness shuts in around one like a wall of masonry, broken and riven incessantly by the glaring white flashes of the lightning.

It was on a night like this, when the daylight had gone but an instant before, and the blackness had come like the falling of a blanket, and the storm with it, that the Colonel sent for the Senior Major, pacing his tent restlessly as the orderly sped on his errand, and pacing it still when the Major came.

"A bad night this, Major," said the Colonel, as the latter shed his dripping rain-coat, "and likely to put us in a nasty corner if we are n't careful."

"If this rain holds for another hour, Elandspruit will be up beyond all fording, and there will be no retreat for our four hundred Tom-

mies. Even the cavalry can't get across to cut us out if it comes to a mix up."

The Colonel paused, puckered his brows, and thought for a moment.

"Maxwell, Dinazulu is in at the east of us with three impis. That will be nigh three thousand men, and every one of them with a Remington and a bandolier, worse luck. Major, double your outposts to the north and to the east, and push them out a clean half-mile into the plain. Send the first file of A Company into Hangman's Kloof. Tell them to hold the entrance and not move from the point where it breaks open to the plain. If Dinazulu tries to get through there, tell your officers to hold the post at all hazards, at any sacrifice, until I can get relief to them. That is the way they will come, if they come at all. If they break through and catch us out here in the open, it's going to be —"

There was another pause.

"Major, who is in command of the first file of A Company? Perkins? Tell Perkins

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to report to the doctor. Detail young Braxton to command that file. Give him another youngster with the same fighting blood, and give him that smart first sergeant of B Company. Let every man have two issues of ammunition, and tell Braxton to hold that pass if every man stays there with him !”

As the tent flap closed behind the Major, the wind roared fiercer and stronger, and the tent wall bellied in as if about to burst, and the thunder, like great guns, put a period to the Colonel's orders.

Four companies of the West Riding regiment had been in camp for six weeks to the north of Elandsprut, for it was the dry season and the sprut was little more than a dribble of water amidst the rocks and the gravel. Across the stream infantry and cavalry were in force, and of this force the camp to the north was the outpost ; well placed to keep in touch with the passes, easy to defend at ordinary times, and quick for relief or retreat. But the tempest had changed all that. The sprut, an hour before but little more than a

chain of stagnant puddles, was now a fierce and rushing torrent, guttering down between crumbling banks with a mighty roar of yellow waters, and the outpost camp was cut off.

The fierce downpour of water which followed the Major's exit, was succeeded a minute later by the half-drowned notes of "General Assembly," followed instantly by the fierce call "To Arms!" so seldom heard at home.

Even as the last high note, repeated five times over, was repeated again only to be drowned by another crash of thunder, a long trail of fire rose up through the rain from the other side of the sprut from a ball rocket, whose burst was quenched by the rain.

The men came rushing from their half-levelled tents, falling and tumbling over one another upon the slippery clay of the water-soaked soil. Then the companies formed up. The Colonel came to the door of his tent and stood and watched.

The Major advanced and faced A Company. "Mr. Braxton!" he said. Braxton stepped from the rear file, walked steadily to the front,

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looking neither to the right nor the left, faced the Major and saluted. "Mr. Braxton, you will take the first file of A Company, and Mr. Fortescue will go with you as second in command. You will march immediately and by the most direct route, to Hangman's Kloof. It is going to take you about half an hour. The first sergeant of B Company will be detailed to your file. If Dinazulu means to rush us, this is the night he will do it. I call your attention, Mr. Braxton, to the fact that you have been selected to hold the kloof. The regiment will expect you to hold it. You are to defend us against a surprise, and are to give us time to call in our outposts, after which we will send you relief, when you will give over the command to the officer commanding the relief party, who may then retreat on the square which we will have formed or hold the kloof, according to the orders of the moment and his best judgment. You will not cease your efforts to hold the kloof until relieved, or called in by runner. Take your men, Mr. Braxton, and get away as quick as you can !"

Then swinging around to B Company, he called : " Captain Owens, you will please relieve Mr. Fortescue of the command of your rear file. He will attach himself to the outpost force under Mr. Braxton, and will obey Mr. Braxton's orders until instructed otherwise. Your first sergeant will come into the outpost force."

Braxton stood like a statue while the Major spoke, and the men who were farthest from the Major whispered one to the other, wondering what had been said, for the words had not reached them above the roar of the tempest.

Three minutes later forty-odd men, with Braxton at their head and young Fortescue bringing up the rear, marched out from the group of tents and were lost in the night and storm. The last words they heard from the camp were in the voice of the Colonel himself calling : " Officer of the guard, put two extra men on every picket. Major, send your men to their shelters. Let them lie down on their arms."

Then from over the sprut the sharp white flash of a Gardner gun, followed the instant after by a dull half-drowned report, told how anxious the General was for his outpost.

Who can tell the thoughts that were in Braxton's mind, or the fears and the self-distrust that were there? Like the tolling of a bell, the parting words of his father rushed through his mind, — "Courage, Country, and Honor," — and his heart instead of bounding responded like a leaden weight.

The men marched behind him, sullen and dogged, with heads bowed by the storm, and Martinis reversed to keep them from filling with water. It was like a funeral march.

Presently the rocky hills of the kloof loomed in front, and then the mouth of the kloof opened, — a yawning chasm of blackness.

Into the pass for twenty yards they marched, and then they were halted. Braxton sent a picket of eight men under Watkins fifty yards farther up, and three men back to the north and south of the mouth, but Fortescue he kept with him.

There was no shelter. The wind roared down the kloof, and drove the rain hard and cold into their faces. The men crouched as best they could behind boulders and prayed for daylight.

There were two hours of this, and then, quite without warning, the crash of a rifle from up the kloof echoed and rolled down the sides, as if in defiance of the thunder that was everywhere. Then two Martinis barked together, and then another.

Braxton was on his feet at the first report. He peered steadily up the pass and then nervously from right to left. The figure at his side sprang away at the first alarm, and Fortescue ran blindly up the pass.

The men were stumbling up to their feet. "What is it, sir, what is it?" said the bugler. The next instant the rally, sharp, quick, and decisive, rang loud above the tempest and was repeated three times.

There was a sound of hurrying footfalls down the pass, and Fortescue and the sergeant came running in together. Down

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Fortescue's face from a cut in his temple ran a trickle of crimson.

"Steady all! Steady all!" roared Fortescue. "Rally! Rally! Rally!" rang the bugle over and over again. The bugler was giving the orders.

"What is it, Braxton? What shall we do?" There was a ring of impatience in Fortescue's voice, and down the pass splashing through water was the sound of many feet.

"I — you — I think, Fortescue —" and Braxton walked nervously towards the rear.

Then the voice of the First Sergeant rang out: "Fix bayonets! Steady, West Riding! Hold low, you can't fire but once! One! Two! Three! Now!" A crashing volley rang up the cliffs. There was a sound of falling in the puddles beyond them, but nothing to see, and the storm roared and shrieked as before.

Then came a sound full of frightful import. Almost at the same instant from the north and the south came the shots of the pickets.

They were nearly surrounded. But the rush from up the kloof had not reached them yet.

There was a long sickening silence, broken only by the click of the Martinis as the breech-blocks were broken down and new cartridges set.

Braxton walked nervously back, and there was a tremble in his voice, — a too obvious tremble.

“We had better get the men back out of this, Fortescue,” he said.

For an instant Fortescue and the Sergeant, the only two who were near him, looked into his face, as the lightning revealed it, with wonder. Then Fortescue straightened himself and looked squarely at the officer who commanded him. “What were our orders?” he said. The words came slow and harsh.

Braxton hesitated and swayed from side to side like a drunken man.

“I know,” he said, — “I know, but the Major did n’t understand. We will be surrounded in a moment. We will be cut off. We will be cut up, Fortescue.”

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“Well!” said Fortescue.

Braxton whirled round to the bugler standing five paces behind him. “Sound the retreat!” he said.

The bugler had heard the orders at the camp. His bugle rose to his mouth slowly and reluctantly ; but never a note was sounded, for the First Sergeant in two bounds was upon him, snatched the bugle from his hand, and whirled it out into the darkness.

The rush down the kloof came again. The men fired at will without orders. The next instant there were four hundred men where there had been forty, and the struggle was hand to hand.

From the camp on the other side of the sprut a Gardner crashed again, and another rocket soared high. Then in the outpost camp the bugles sang and sang again, “Form Square ;” and even as the square formed, a dark figure, running like a hare, came out of the blackness of the hill shadows through the rain, and Braxton rushed through and fell panting with never a scratch upon him.

From the kloof there was still an occasional rifle-shot, still a flash in the darkness now and then, and Braxton lay still and panted.

The Colonel grasped him roughly by the shoulder and jerked him to his feet.

"*Where are your men ?*" he said.

Braxton gathered his breath with a deep sob. "All cut up, Colonel ! They are all cut up !"

The Colonel shook him roughly. "Do you hear those shots ?" he said. "Who is holding the pass ? That's what I want to know. Don't talk to me about being cut up ! *Who is holding the pass ?*"

Braxton dropped his head on his breast and murmured dully and slowly : "Courage, Country, Honor ; Courage, Country, Honor ; Courage, Country, Honor."

The firing in the pass died out, and presently a few stragglers crawled in.

For ten minutes the square was engaged with a handful of the enemy and beat them off. The wailing of the storm died down,

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and the moon soared up, and the field was still and dead as a churchyard.

The morning dawned bright and crisp, with the taste of new-washed air. The reconnoissance party came in from the kloof with heavy burdens, and in their midst was Fortescue just alive. Up the kloof, amidst the rocks and the rain pools, were nigh a hundred Zulus dead.

There was no passing the sprut yet, and no tidings had passed from side to side save the shouted message from vidette to vidette that all was well with the outpost, that they had beaten the enemy back up the pass with a loss of thirty men ; but such is the force of regimental pride that no word was said of Braxton, — Braxton in his tent under arrest.

The dying boy officer under the hospital tent moaned slowly through fever-parched lips to the Colonel his dying deposition. The Colonel took it down with a set and gray-hued face. For an instant the boy was still, and then he gasped, "I could — go happier — Colonel, if Ours was n't disgraced."

The Colonel sat still for an instant, then rose with a shudder, and drew the blanket slowly over Fortescue's face.

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The court-martial had sat three days. The evidence was meagre and vague. There wasn't much evidence at all save the dying deposition of Fortescue, and the Judge Advocate himself had to confess that that sounded more like the ravings of a fevered man than the possibility of truth.

Each day the court-martial sent a note to the brigade surgeon at the hospital tent, and each day word came back, "Sergeant Watkins may be strong enough to-morrow."

For Sergeant Watkins was the only man left, and Sergeant Watkins had been sore wounded.

The bugler had known, but the bugler was buried long ago.

The prisoner said never a word. He refused to speak in his own behalf, and had sat each day through the trial with his head bowed in his hands.

The fourth day, supported on either side by

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a hospital steward, Sergeant Watkins came, and those who saw his face as he looked at the bowed head of the man under trial wondered why it flushed and lit up so, for the Honorable Court did not know that Sergeant Watkins had nearly drowned in the Thames at Eton eight years before.

Sergeant Watkins gave his age, his name, and his period of service, in a strong, firm voice. He testified that he had been in the kloof that night; that he had run back with Lieutenant Fortescue, whom he had met half-way when the other men of the picket had been cut up; that he had found Lieutenant Braxton standing farther up the kloof than his men, listening.

Then came the question, "Did you hear Lieutenant Braxton's orders?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you hear all of his orders?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were his orders?"

"The bugler sounded the rally thrée times, sir."

“ In accordance with his orders ? ”

The prisoner looked up quickly into the face of the Sergeant.

The Sergeant waited an instant, and then he said, “ Yes, sir.”

The prisoner turned pale and started to raise himself. The president of the court turned to him.

“ Mr. Braxton, you may remain seated,” he said.

“ Sergeant, what was the behavior of your officer ? ”

The Sergeant answered slowly and steadily, “ The behavior of an officer and a gentleman, sir.”

“ Did your officer show any signs of fear or anxiety ? ”

The Sergeant answered, “ Anxiety, yes, sir ; fear, no, sir.”

“ Did your officer draw his revolver ? ”

The Judge Advocate leaned forward. He was a stern and iron man, and he rapped the table with his fist.

“ Remember, Sergeant, you are under oath, Did your officer draw his revolver ? ”

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The Sergeant flushed, looked straight ahead, and said, "Yes, sir."

The Judge Advocate was almost angry.

"Then how do you explain the fact that his revolver was in the holster when he got back to the square?"

The Sergeant looked straight ahead, and then said, "I do not know, sir."

Then came the crucial question, "How do you account for the fact that your officer was not scratched or wounded?"

The Sergeant answered, "Because I stood in front of him, sir."

"How do you account for the fact that your officer won back to the square alone?"

The Sergeant turned very pale. "Because, sir, the men ran, and because Lieutenant Braxton ran ahead of them with his sword and his revolver to beat them back up the pass and called to them. The bugler was down. I think he threw away his bugle. Lieutenant Braxton lost his men in the darkness. I ran after him, and the last I knew, sir, he was

trying to beat them back. Then I went down, sir, and that is all I remember."

The prisoner raised himself slowly to his full height. His head was proud and high. He turned to the President of the court. "Colonel, the man lies !"

That was all the prisoner said. Three hours later the doctor pinned at the head of his bed a slip that said "Brain Fever."

Without rising the court returned a verdict, — a verdict that meant almost as much disgrace to the regiment as "Guilty," — "Not Proven."

In two months the war had drifted northward, and the British columns were splitting up to pin Cetewayo in.

Braxton, pale, old, and thin from the hospital, rejoined his regiment.

In his pocket was a letter from the pater, — a sad letter, but with one word of comfort at the end: "We will not talk about it, lad; live it down. You know the motto of our fathers."

The Colonel's heart was softened by a letter

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from Braxton Hall, and he sent for the Lieutenant. His words were meant to be kindly, but they cut like steel.

“Lieutenant Braxton,” he said, “I will see that your resignation is accepted and that you have an honorable discharge from the service.”

Braxton answered stiffly, “Not Proven, Colonel. I have not tendered my resignation, nor shall I.”

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A strong reconnoissance party marched two days over the dry plains. The earth crumbled to dust under their feet and choked them, and the Major shot his horse for mercy's sake.

All through the last day the canteens had been empty when they won to the springs at last. The men, when they saw the springs, rushed forward madly up to their knees in the water; but the Major was before them, and drew his sword, and beat them back with threats and warnings.

The Major's lips were blue, and he was choking, but he cried out that perhaps the

water was poisoned, that no man must drink for the present. Then he set a guard over the water. The men grumbled, fretted, and almost mutinied; but the guards, who had been as they a moment before, were as firm as iron now.

The Major summoned the surgeon and the other officers. The surgeon dipped some water up in a cup, smelled of it, tasted it gently, spat it out, and shook his head.

"I don't know, Major," he said; "it looks all right, but it does n't taste right. After what happened to Mason's command at the springs to the south, I am fearful of it, and yet, Major, if we don't let them drink we shall have half of the men delirious before morning, and like as not none of us will ever get back again; and yet I don't dare say drink it, Major, I don't dare." The officers broke up into little knots, and the men threw themselves upon the ground and gasped as if dying.

But one officer stood aloof and alone. To him no man spoke. With a step steady and

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firm, Braxton walked to the Major and saluted him.

"Major," he said, "have I your permission to drink the water?"

The Major shook his head. "No, no, Braxton. That won't do at all. We officers have got to set the example. I dare say we shall get off all right. The risk is too great. If you drink, we shall have half of the men in, in an instant."

"Excuse me, Major," said Braxton, "if somebody don't drink, you will have half of the men dead in twenty-four hours."

The Major looked at him again with a start.

"Do you mean —" he said, and stopped.

"Yes, sir," said Braxton.

"Braxton, I knew your father. We were brigaded together in India. I can't let you do that."

Braxton whirled half round angrily and pointed to a group of officers.

"Yes," he said, "you know my father. What do you think he would do? What do

you think he would do if he were sent to guard a pass and did n't guard it? What do you think my father's old age will be if I live on in the regiment unknown to my brother officers, unspoken to? Major, have I your permission?"

Through his blackened lips the Major whispered, "Yes."

Braxton walked steadily down towards the water, and the Major shouted, "Double the guard!"

The soiled white helmet was dipped up full, and Braxton drank long and deep.

The next instant the men jumped to their feet and rushed down to the water. The guard tussled with them, and Braxton fought with the other officers, dragging them back. When they were foiled and sullen again, Braxton turned to his comrades.

"Major, don't let the men drink that water. Rest them for an hour and get them out of here. I think I will sit down, Major."

There was a long silence, broken only by the deep breathing of the men.

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Then Braxton lay down on his elbow.

“Major, I would like to shake hands with all the fellows.”

Silently, one by one, they filed by and shook his hand, and the surgeon did his best with all he had.

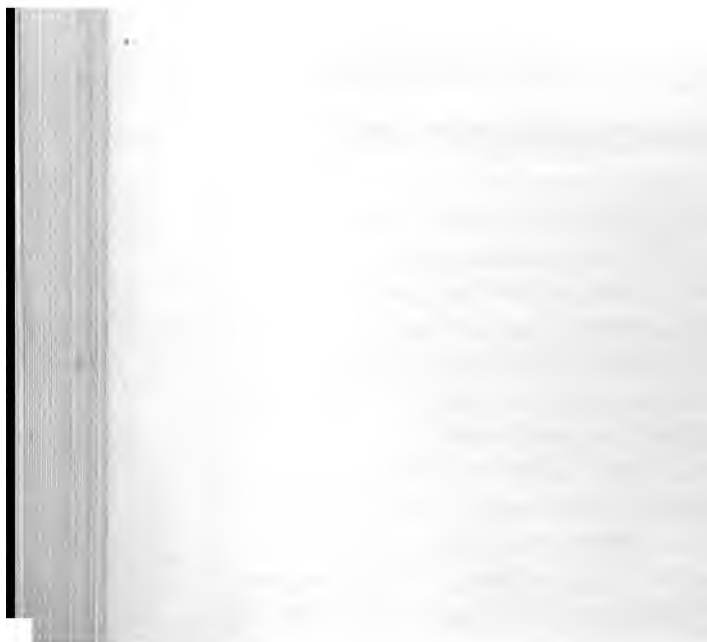
An hour later one soldierly form lay still by the bitter water. Two hundred men were struggling through the night back to the place where sweet waters flow, and behind them, still in the moonlight, they left peace, and with it honor, strength, and courage.

green and yellow banner had been unsheathed and spread out behind him by reverential hands, he rose slowly in his place and impressed order upon his audience by a few sharp blows of the gavel.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have called you together to-night for the consideration of a most important and serious matter. As one of the largest and most important societies in the land, it is just and proper that we should meet together on this occasion, to determine which side we are on.

"Gentlemen, as you all well know probably, there is going to be a war, and the Johannesburg chapter of the Ancient Order must determine at this time whether it proposes to prove itself treacherous and cowardly, throwing in its lot with the sons of tyranny, and striving by force of word or deed to support the cause of the oppressor ; or whether the Ancient Order, secure in the strength of its traditions, and faithful to its pledges, shall cast in its future with the glorious cause of freedom and independence.

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BLOOD WILL TELL

THE Golden Harp Hotel, which stands, as all good Uitlanders know, five blocks beyond the market square of Johannesburg, was one great blaze and glitter of light.

The bar, which indeed constituted the greater portion of the lower floor of the Golden Harp, was crowded full with men, whose time seemed to be divided between joyful handshaking and the drinking of healths.

Above stairs in the hall, sacred at various times to the Free Masons, the Sherwood Foresters, and to ward dances, the Rand Post of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Hibernians was gathering for an extraordinary council. Already half the seats were occupied, although the throng in the bar was still undiminished.

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made good their escape, at which the president raised his eyes and spoke again.

“Gentlemen, I ask you to notice that Mr. Dorsey the contractor, Mr. O’Brien of the railroad service, and Mr. Owens the grocer have voted against the resolution, and I ask you, gentlemen, to deal as lightly with them as you can.”

No further votes being cast in the negative, the president at the expiration of three minutes snapped his watch together emphatically, raised himself to his full height in the magnificence of his authority, and said, —

“Gentlemen, I am proud of you! It shall be my pleasure and my privilege to carry personally to his Excellency the President, your assurances of loyalty and fidelity to the great and glorious cause of liberty. Gentlemen, the meeting is adjourned.”

The president of the Johannesburg chapter of the Ancient Order had been born some thirty years before in good old county Kerry. His earliest recollections of boyhood related to details incident to the removal of a cow’s

tail at dead of night, in which formality he had assisted to the limit of his youthful ability. Shortly thereafter the not too small family into which he had been thrust had removed, with all of its household goods, to the freer air and more encompassing liberty of the United States.

There, in the great city of New York, a remunerative job awaited his father, in connection with one of the municipal government departments which had need of honest and faithful servants.

But a well-celebrated July Fourth and a too prolonged walk upon one of the great shipping-piers of the east side had resulted in making Terence an orphan at the early age of eight years.

There being no votes in his family after this painful occurrence, life had become hard and irksome, even in the land of complete liberty, and Terence Collins had drifted from the selling of newspapers slowly upwards to the management of a news-stand; then travelling westward to Pittsburg, and so by gradual

stages to the Pacific coast, had all through his early manhood struggled with varying success towards the upper rounds of labor, first in one and then in another of the gold-mining communities of the Pacific coast.

The gold rush to the Rand had tempted him in the early nineties, and borrowing what he was pleased to call a "grub stake" from his old mother in New York, to whom he had faithfully remitted year by year a modest stipend, he took ship over sea to Delagoa Bay and so into the golden Transvaal.

Somehow or other, in his rough buffetings with a hard world, he had, like most other smart young Irish Americans, gathered together a fund of experience and superficial wisdom which served him well and passed for education.

Young, vigorous, magnetic, and full to the brim with the essential and necessary hatred of all things British, he had speedily forged to the front in the Irish community of the Rand, and found himself quite naturally a leader.

At the time of the meeting just described

he was assistant foreman at the third diggings of the Consolidated Gold Fields Company, and there was no better man, no better rough and ready expert in the gold industry than he. His employers valued him and feared him by turns. It was always Terence who spotted with unerring certainty the Kaffir who was stealing dust. It was Terence who was first in the shaft when the shoring timbers were giving way. It was Terence, too, who called the men out and told the manager they must have more wages, at all times, as it seemed opportune.

On the morning following the meeting, Johannesburg was full of news. The Liverpool regiment had landed and taken train for the north, and the news, delayed in transmission, had just come through.

The buzz of excitement which followed the posting of this bulletin had scarce subsided when another and yet more momentous bulletin went up; the first section of Pretoria artillery had fired upon an armored train for Mafeking, and the war was on.

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he mounted the steps without the formality of announcement, and walked straight up to the President, the old man held out a great flabby hand like a ham, and greeted him in guttural accents of welcome.

Collins was clad in a light suit of tweeds and straw hat, and his pipe was going in full rivalry to the President's. He unbuttoned his coat now, and threw it well back over his shoulders, showing a heavy cable of gold watch-chain. He thrust his thumbs deep into his arm-pits, inflated his chest, held his head up like an orator, and addressed the President in Dutch.

What he said was this: "*Mr. President and gentlemen of your staff, it gives me great pleasure to tender to the glorious cause of liberty and to the screaming eagle which leads it, as impersonated in your august presence, the services of a complete commando of noble Irish patriots, who love the cause of liberty better than they love the sons of mammon and oppression! Mr. President, the Johannesburg chapter volunteers its service*

complete and as a whole, with the exception of three members who will probably not escape with impunity. It tenders its services, I say, for personal, political, or military purposes, as may be deemed wisest and best, in the judgment of our martial leader, as personified in yourself."

The President of the Transvaal Republic is a man of few, grave, and sober words, and men say that he has but one Book of counsel, and that is very old.

For a moment or two after Collins had finished, the President eyed him through half-closed eyelids shrewdly, and then puffed for a moment or two reflectively upon his pipe. Then at last he spoke.

"Truly, Heer Collins," he said, "the strong right arm of your noble and liberty-loving race is welcome in defence of the cause of the oppressed. Truly, I say unto you, the oppressor shall be cast down and there shall be no help for him. Mighty is the wrath of a righteous man, and terrible is his vengeance."

His shrewd old eyes half closed and looked

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at Collins intently. "Truly, I say to you, Heer Collins, the houses and the flocks and the goods of the oppressor shall be the spoils of the victor, and he that girdeth on the sword in the righteous defence of the oppressed shall reap a just reward."

The President did not fail to catch the gleam of satisfaction which passed over Collins's face.

Pausing for an instant to note it, he turned sharply to one of the bearded Boers beside him, and said, —

"Heer Blumberg, you will to Heer Collins immediately give an order on our armory in Johannesburg, for the issuance of three hundred German rifles automatic, for the armament of his magnificent commando.

"Heer Stelling, you shall at once give to Heer Collins an order on our free treasury for three hundred golden sovereigns, which, Heer Stelling, you will note, you shall duly replace from the tax which we are to-day levying on the storehouse dust of the Consolidated Company. These golden sovereigns, Heer Collins,

you shall distribute among your commando in such proportions between officers and men as you in your liberal and just judgment shall deem fitting and best.

“Heer Blumberg, you shall for Heer Collins immediately prepare upon parchment a writing, which I myself shall sign, giving to Heer Collins a commission as Field-Cornet, to command, as my personal representative, the commando which from this time shall be known as the commando of Free Ireland, and which, in the name of righteousness I hereby assert, shall be specifically entitled to carry not only the flag of freedom, as embodied in the pennant of the Transvaal, but also the yet more glorious flag of green which Heer Collins, as a true son of liberty, holdeth dear.”

The President rose heavily from his chair, — a towering mountain of flesh and bones.

“The very excellent Heer Field-Cornet Collins will be pleased to accompany me within, that I may confer with him on matters of state.”

Collins’s chest stuck out like the breast of a

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pouter pigeon, and he fairly strutted into the house behind the President.

Within, in the dim light of the gray old Dutch parlor, dark with fusty hangings, the sweet-faced old vrow of the household sat knitting woollen socks. The shrewd old President bowed low before her, which perhaps was not his usual custom, and waved his ponderous hand towards Collins.

"Wife of my heart," he said, "behold how our cause prevaieth. Here is the mighty Heer Field Cornet Collins come to proffer to our holy cause the loyal help of his great liberty-loving people."

The old vrow rose from her chair and bowed clumsily; then shaking her head as one in doubt, made slowly for the door, and Collins and the President were alone.

The old man's manner changed almost the instant the door was closed, but he did not forget himself, for truly is it said that he makes no man his confidant.

"Ach, Heer Collins," he said, "we understand one another, you and I; no need for

useless words. Is it for the noble Heer Collins, strong in his great self-sacrifice, to hide his shining light under a bushel and to have no greater part in our good cause than the command of three hundred men?"

The President paused again and watched what his words had done, between half-closed eyes.

"Seat thyself, Heer Collins," he said. "Heer Collins, great is the trust that the wise repose in an honest man. It is revealed to me that to you I shall disclose a mighty matter of state, — to you, in whose veins runs not only the blood of liberty, but the blood of a great line of kings. Nay, my son, speak not. I am informed on many things. It is to you, with your noble blood and lion heart, that I am about to intrust a great mission. To you presently I shall give a writing on most thin paper. This writing you shall convey with all despatch to the south, and place in the hands of one Heer Stein, who is a member of the Cape Assembly and a most devout adherent of the oppressor Empress."

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The old man chuckled gutturally at his heavy wit.

"Now, I shall make it known to you that this Heer Stein is a most upright and thriving merchant, and from him we shall have an order on the Portuguese storehouses at Lorenzo Marquez for a certain large consignment of boxes and casks, containing much rich store of food and provisions for the poor people of Johannesburg. You understand me well, Heer Collins. These stores of food and comfort you shall receive at Lorenzo Marquez, explaining well their nature to the Portuguese officials, and bringing them through with all despatch in two or three trains to Pretoria, for we need them gravely."

Collins was silent for a moment, save for a deep indrawn whistle.

"And if by chance I should be hung, your Excellency," said Collins.

"Glorious is the reward of the man who dies in the cause of freedom," said the President.

"Hem!" said Collins, "what is there in it?"

The President did not understand at all.

"Nay, my son, have I not told thee? — the great store of food and stuffs for the poor people of Johannesburg."

"Oh, come," said Collins, "what's there in it for me?"

"Full well I know," said the President, "that the brave Heer Collins is too noble and generous to be a rich man, and full well I know that so long a journey and so great a transportation must call for much gold, all to be expended in the good cause of liberty."

The President crossed to a secretary on the other side of the room.

"Heer Collins gives me his word to do this thing," he said.

"Sure," said Collins.

"Then for the expenses of Heer Collins let this suffice," said the President, and placed in his hands a roll of crisp five-pound notes.

Collins counted them with great deliberation.

"I guess that will see me through," he said.

Then without further words he passed into

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the outer room, took the writings from the officer of the staff, and hurried back to the station.

At Johannesburg that same evening, the Irish Legion was organized with all due formality. The Mauser rifles, all seven-shot automatic repeaters, the bandoliers, and the uniform hats were distributed.

Patrick O'Hara, a red-cheeked, red-haired, square-built little Irishman, was elected with great unanimity to fill the place of second in command.

Amidst a solemn hush Terence climbed the ladder of oratory to higher rungs than he had ever done before, whilst he presented to the Irish Legion a stand of colors, and the green flag was a little the bigger of the two.

In closing his burst of eloquence, Terence said: "And, men of Ireland, although the noble President has with much care and wisdom selected me for your leader, he has also deemed it wise to select me for the time being to transact a mission of great trust, the nature of which is secret, otherwise I would tell you

all about it. It will therefore be necessary for me to be away from you during the early portions of the terrific struggle which is impending, but it's my hope and expectation to be back before there's any fighting. In the mean time, in peace and in war, in camp or in battle, you will obey with implicit faith Mr. O'Hara, whom I hereby appoint, by the power invested in me by his Excellency the President, Deputy Acting Field Cornet of the Irish Legion. And now, Irishmen, sons of valor and of freedom, guard well the green banner of your native land, and take as much care of the other as you can!"

The stolid Dutchmen who were onlookers at this the first appearance of the Irish Legion, were almost startled into joining the cheers which followed this noble address.

In his own sleeping-room, directly over the bar of the Golden Harp, Terence examined that night with much solicitude the thin tissue message in cipher which must be taken through to the Cape and handed to a member of the Assembly.

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Removing one of his shoes, Terence extracted the inner sole with much patience and care, and thrust the message beneath. Having accomplished this, he, with similar deliberation, removed it again from its hiding-place, muttering to himself the while, "I have n't read about Benedict Arnold for nothing."

Several other hiding-places were tried and abandoned with similar deliberation, until finally Terence hit upon a plan which evidently impressed him deeply.

A series of loud shoutings at last produced a Kaffir boy from the regions below, and him he sent for a plug of tobacco. This Terence split with great care down the middle, hollowed out a small receptacle for the paper close to the edge at one corner, and then with the aid of a bottle of glue restored the tobacco to the appearance of its original condition, marking the corner which hid his trust with a forceful cross in lead pencil.

Terence slept well that night. The bank-notes which were to be the sinews of his journey—so the President said—rustled

crisply under his pillow, and the little bag of gold coin which he held in trust for the Irish Legion reposed beside them.

His first act in arising in the gray of the morning was to remove from beneath the butt of his new rifle — Boer officers do not carry swords — his new plug of tobacco. His next was to deliberately cut a slice from the end of the plug farthest from the pencil mark ; after which he examined the end diligently to see if it still held traces of the glue, and found it did not.

Two hours later the train was bearing him and his trust funds swiftly southwards towards Dundee.


Had Terence been an older and wiser man, he would have sought the Cape through Portuguese territory. But he attempted what he believed the quicker route, — by train to the British border, a tramp or a ride, as it might chance, through the debatable ground, and then another train to Cape Town.

Whatever Terence may have lacked, the quality of courage was not wanting, and his

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thoroughly Irish nature was full of enthusiasm for a cause which he vaguely thought must somehow be linked with the freedom of Ireland. To him there was nothing incongruous or improper in profiting, if he were clever enough, from the treasury of the very cause with which he had cast his destiny. He had received money to be expended at his discretion, for expenses and for the encouragement of the enthusiasm of his followers. His followers needed no encouragement—their enthusiasm was too obvious—and if the funds should more than suffice for his expenses, so much the more credit to him for his economy. He was not a thief, but he knew how to drive a bargain.

If Terence had not shaken hands so heartily with the bearded guard of the Transvaal train which hauled him to the border, he might very probably have brought those boxes safely from Lorenzo Marquez ; but there were those among the British refugees travelling southward who thought it strange that one of their number should entertain such sentiments



towards one so obviously of the enemy, and there was even a man who thought he knew Terence, and thought he had seen him with the banner of green the evening before.

Collins did not hurry southward. It seemed to him that haste would look suspicious.

He talked glibly to others, who were hurrying south for refuge, of his hatred of the Boers, his certainty of their speedy defeat, and of his determination to get back to the States with all despatch, and never to get into such a heathen country again.

At the first British outpost, with only six more miles to win betwixt him and the train for Cape Town, Terence found himself suddenly surrounded by a little group of mounted men, all in khaki, with soft gray slouch hats caught up on one side by a bunch of cock's feathers — a patrol of the Cape Mounted Rifles.

"Well, fellows," said Terence, "guess I got through all right."

"Perhaps you've got through," said the officer in command, "but we have n't."

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"Oh, I don't know," said Terence, "it is n't going to be much of a fight. You boys will be in Pretoria inside of a week."

He little knew how much truth he spoke.

"Come," said the officer, more sternly, "we have had enough of that! Sergeant, search that man!"

Terence protested vigorously. He pointed out the wrath of the great government across the sea, which would protect its own. He told his captors of the terrible war that awaited them if they molested a citizen of the great republic. He told them in great detail of his influence with the democratic party in California. All of which was quite meaningless to them, as he might have realized, and his hands had to go up over his head, and his confidence began to be shaken.

In the mean time the troopers were enjoying their task hugely. The first thing they found was the money.

"Now, Lieutenant," said Terence, "you won't be taking that away from me? That is all the money I have got together in two years,

and when I have got safe away with it, you won't be taking from a poor man his hard earnings?"

"Your money is all right," said the Lieutenant. "Your trade must have prospered up yonder. I'll turn this in to the Colonel; maybe you won't be needing it again. It is not healthy to be thought a spy."

In the mean time one of the troopers had produced a pipe, and after searching diligently through his many pockets, applied to a comrade for tobacco.

"Say, mister," said Terence, "can't I give that fellow some tobacco?"

The officer assented, and Terence brought forth his plug.

"Don't smoke myself," he said, "but I chew, though. Guess I'll take a bite, if you don't mind."

With great deliberation Collins bit off the corner with the pencil mark and handed the plug to the trooper.

Terence masticated diligently, too diligently, perhaps; but yet all might have been well

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but for the heat of the African sun, for as the trooper cut his tobacco away, the plug fell in two in the middle, and alas, the glue was too obvious, and on examination a trace was even found of the hollow at the corner.

It was at this point that Terence choked violently and convulsively. He had swallowed his tobacco.

The officer was wroth. It was evident that a despatch had escaped him.

Three hours later the prisoner was under guard in an outpost camp, and the Colonel in command had sent a galloper to the General with word that he had captured a spy.

The galloper had far to go, for the outpost was isolated, and he never won through. Hence it was that Terence four days later was still a prisoner untried, for the General did not know that he had been captured, and the outpost had time to become accustomed to his presence. Meanwhile the British force—some eight thousand men—had moved up to the eastward of them.

The hills to the north and the east swarmed with black specks through the daylight hours, and the hill faces themselves were bright with red and gray heaps of new-turned earth.

For the last two days the pickets' rifles had cracked intermittently, and once on the third day a half-hour of terrific firing had been followed by the news of the destruction of an armored train.

The General came up at last ; but his headquarters were two miles to the east, and he had no time to spare at the moment for such cases as that of Collins.

The Cape Rifles, who had made the capture, were brigaded now on the extreme right flank with a half battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers, and Terence's heart yearned and bounded at the sound of their honest brogue.

The morning of the sixth day of his captivity was just dawning when Terence's guard awoke him roughly with a shake.

"Come, up you get!" he said. "We are starting for Pretoria to-day. Your friends over yonder will have to take medicine before

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night. The Colonel's orders are to turn you over to the rear guard. It's the Dublins, and you'll have a chance to find out what an honest Irishman is."

Under guard he was marched a mile to the rear; and when he was turned over to his countrymen, the words which greeted him were not such as one good Irishman deserves at the lips of another.

The battle had opened already. Far out to the eastward, at the base of the hills a battery of field guns had gone into action. They were barking steadily by sections without drawing a reply.

On the western flank, where Terence had been but an hour before, the colonial troops had moved forward and were exchanging shots merrily with the trenches on the hill-side; whilst the centre was moving slowly up in open order to rush the hills and drive the enemy back.

Between the advancing British force and the rear guard, two squadrons of cavalry in close formation were trotting briskly to the

westward to make a turning movement around the left flank.

From somewhere in the rear a half battery of Royal Horse Artillery went by the Dublins at a gallop, and was lost in a whirl of dust towards the centre, and five minutes later Terence heard them open and saw little puffs of yellow dust rise like wind-blown feathers on the crests of the distant hills.

The centre was up to the base of the hills now, and still the hills were silent save for the scattering shots of the "snipers" away out where the right wing, pivoting on the centre, was slowly swinging up.

Twelve hundred yards, — a thousand, — nine hundred, — eight hundred.

Terence shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, and muttered imprecations on the heads of the lazy fellows over there among the hills.

Then suddenly from the summit of the central kopje he descried a sudden sputter of fire, like a bundle of fire-crackers exploding in the dark, and a moment after he saw

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a confused gap in the centre of the advancing British force. Then faint and distant, but clear, came the whirr of a one-pounder Maxim in action.

The whole British front was firing, but save for the dust the view was unimpeded, for the powder was modern smokeless.

The Maxim rattled incessantly, but all else on the hillside was silent. The British were seven hundred yards from the hills now, when suddenly — crash ! — and the hills were set in fire.

From the distant advancing force the murmur of many voices reached the rear guard faintly, and the noise was like a thousand watches ticking in one's brain.

The dust rose yellow and heavy in a long cloud over the two-mile line, and advanced rapidly towards the hill base. There was n't much to see after that, — just a seething cloud of dust at the centre and a noise of struggle.

Presently out from the confusion came bearer-parties, staggering under moaning bur-

dens, and the rear guard fretted and fumed and swore in English and Celtic.

An hour it lasted unbrokenly, and then through the open ground between the attacking force and the reserve came a galloper.

The Colonel of the Dublins sat his horse not twenty yards from where Collins stood under guard. The galloper dashed up and saluted.

"The General's compliments," he said. "The Dublins will advance to the right centre to the support of the Devons, who are driven in."

The horse whirled sharply, and the galloper was off to the front again.

The men who were guarding Terence heard the orders as well as he. "Hooray for old Ireland!" they shouted. "Hooray for old Ireland and the freedom of the Uitlanders!"

Then turning angrily on Terence, "It's a nice Irishman you are, not to be fighting in the good cause!" and Terence heard his own voice shouting and cheering, "Hooray! Hooray for old Ireland!"

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A junior officer dashed up to the guards and shouted : "Sergeant, take your men back to their company ! Let that rascal go ! He will be shot fast enough before he gets through."

The next moment Terence was free, and the Dublins in open order, columns of fours, were marching towards the dust storm amidst a fury of Irish cheers.

The Colonel had dismounted and was marching at the head of his men, turning now and again to wave his sword and to cheer.

Terence stood alone with his chin in his hand. Then, when they had gone perhaps two hundred yards, he hesitated a moment, and then was after them like a deer.

In the next moment he was rushing forward like the rest, cheering wildly, as he had cheered a week before for the cause of freedom, and glorious old Ireland.

Up to the firing line they came in open order, double rank, battalion front, the Colonel ahead of them still. Another galloper was there to meet them. The Colonel's helmet was in one

hand, and he held them both up high over his head.

The bugle sang for the men to lie down and then sang loud to fire. All the men lay down ; but the officers still stood, and Terence, remembering that he was a Field Cornet, stood too.

"The General's compliments," said the galloper ; "the Dublins supported on the right by the Devons will advance by rushes to the base of the hill on the right flank, where they will fix bayonets, take and silence the batteries on the brow of the hill."

Even as the galloper spoke, the man who lay at Terence's feet dropped his rifle, clapped his hand to his side, rolled over on his back, and Terence, cheering wildly, grabbed the rifle.

Six short rushes took them to the base of the hill ; and Terence, who had gathered ammunition somewhere during the rushes, joined in the last volley with the others.

The bugles sang the charge, the bayonets were fixed, and with one long loud Irish cheer the Dublins sprang up the hill at the charge ;

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and Terence, shouting loud and shrill with the best, charged in the front rank.

The Maxims spattered and crashed from the hill above. The small arms roared incessantly ; and Terence, with lips set straight and hard, dashed with bayonet down with the foremost, while above, on the brow of the hill, the green banner beside the striped one told the point which was held in the cause of that other freedom by the Irish Legion of Johannesburg.

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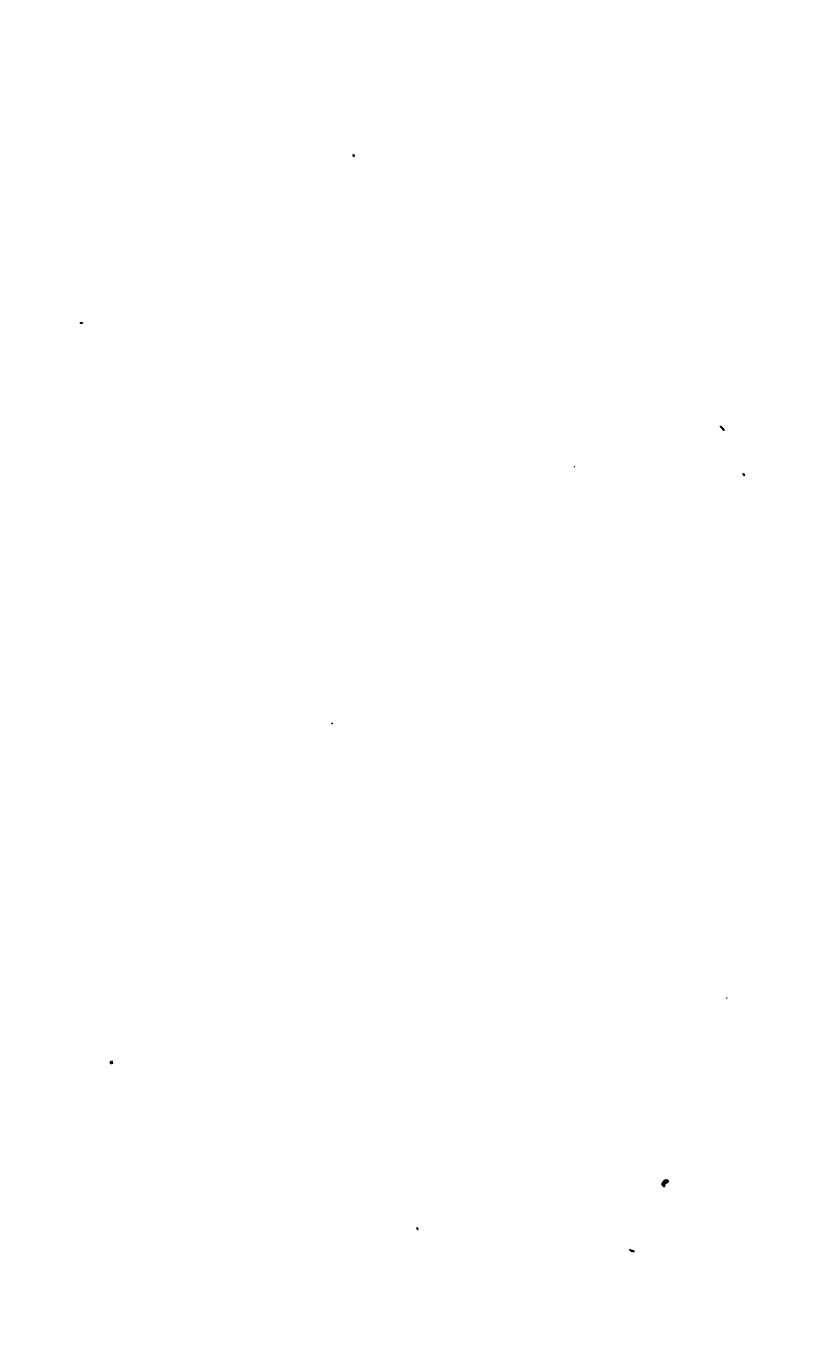
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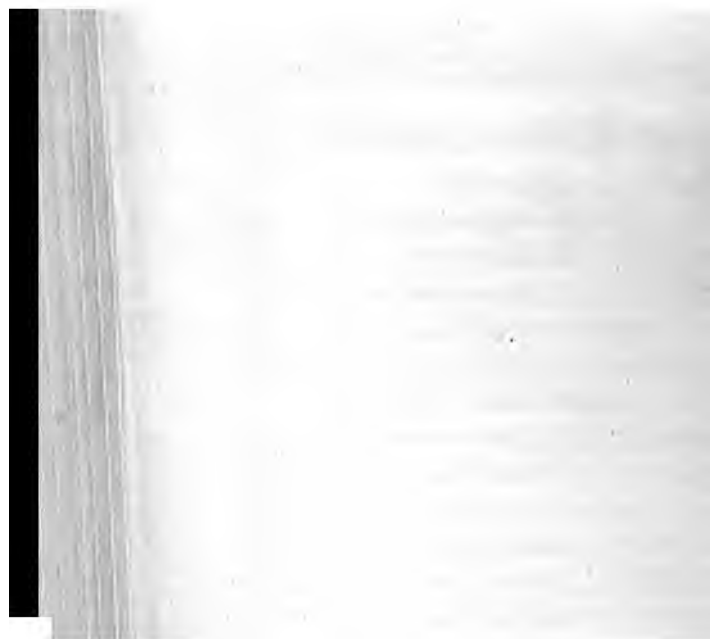
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